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THE WHIG PARTY IN THE SOUTH

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TO MY WIFE

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PREFACE.

“Under a constitutional government”, says James Ford Rhodes (I, 2), “the history of political parties is the civil history of the country.” If this be true, the general tendency to treat the national political party as a unit has led to a distortion of the history of the ante-bellum South, to the extent, at least, of a failure to realize the local character and importance of the Whig party in the slave-holding states. It is the chief aim of this study to correct the mistakes of *a priori* reasoning, and to sketch the history of the Whig party in the South in its relations to the local problems and to the national organization. My original plan was to study the Whig party in the South solely with reference to its relations to the slavery controversy. I soon found, from a preliminary survey of the origin and general character of the party, that a more extended treatment of its early history than I had planned was essential to a proper understanding of the later developments. Thus the monograph enlarged its scope until it came to embrace a general study of the Whig party in the South.

The party history is divided by the election of 1844 into two nearly equal periods, each unified by its own peculiar problem. A further subdivision shows five stages of development: (1) At the beginning, in the thirties, the southern Whigs were part of a large anti-Jackson opposition organization which included in the

South an important state rights element and a fair proportion of the large planting class. (2) In spite of a natural hostility in the South to what came to be considered as Whig policy and Whig measures, by the election of 1844 the Whigs there had been brought into unity and harmony with respect to the party program formulated by Henry Clay. (3) The slavery issue, coming at a time when they had succumbed to the nationalizing influence of party, forced them to act cautiously in the face of the anti-slavery inclinations of their northern co-partisans. A steady conservatism made them the opponents of radical southern movements and the advocates of compromise. (4) But their activity in response to these motives and the growing anti-slavery radicalism in the northern wing rendered them unfit to act as the champions of the slave power. A steady decline, accelerated by developments in the campaign of 1852, led to their downfall and to the disappearance of the Whig organization in the South. (5) Finally, we have the attempts to revive the defunct party organization, most successfully in the form of the Know Nothing party with its brilliant but short and erratic career in the middle fifties. These attempts continued until the outbreak of the Civil War, when the force of sectionalism seemed to triumph and when the barriers of party lines were easily levelled or swept aside.

A northerner of the present day and generation, I found no difficulty in treating the various phases of southern history which have fallen within the scope of my researches, with an entire absence of sectional feeling. On the contrary, a careful use of the private correspondence of southern statesmen and of the public

prints has given me the local coloring which is indispensable for such a study. The treatment of the subject is intended to be entirely objective and scientific. The work does not attempt to pronounce judgment upon Jackson and Van Buren and their administrations either to praise or condemn. I have contented myself with a purely objective treatment, with depicting the attitude of the opposition, which, it should be remembered, was strongly partisan. The same is true of the succeeding Democratic administrations. As to the split under Tyler, the work does not concern itself with the question of his consistency or of the merits of his administration, but deals solely with the position of the southern Whigs.

My materials have been drawn principally from the library of the University of Pennsylvania, from the Library of Congress, and from the libraries of the Philadelphia Library Company, of the University of Michigan, and of the historical societies of Pennsylvania and Buffalo. In addition to the thanks that are due to these institutions, special acknowledgments are due to Dr. Stephen B. Weeks of Washington and to Professor U. B. Phillips of the University of Michigan for the valuable and extensive collections of contemporary correspondence which they generously placed at my disposal. Professor Phillips further showed his interest in my researches by reading the greater portion of my manuscript and making helpful suggestions. The value of his assistance is evident from his intimate knowledge of the field. His essay on "The Southern Whigs" in the *Turner Essays* appeared after my material had in large part been collected and my work planned and partly written; it gave me the satisfaction

of finding that we were working in the same direction and was always an incentive to a high standard of scholarship.

I wish here to acknowledge my obligations to those who have directed my historical training, by formal instruction or by friendly counsel and advice. In this connection I mention especially Professor C. H. Van Tyne and Professor E. W. Dow of the University of Michigan, Professor Frederic L. Paxson of the University of Wisconsin, and Professors J. B. McMaster, H. V. Ames, E. P. Cheyney, and W. E. Lingelbach of the University of Pennsylvania. Professor Ames early saw the possibilities of the subject of this work and, jointly with Professor McMaster, directed the course of my researches, the results of which were accepted by the Graduate School of the University of Pennsylvania in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. Since the award of the Justin Winsor prize Professor William S. Robertson and Dr. Solon J. Buck of the University of Illinois have aided me with helpful criticisms and suggestions in preparing the work for press.

ARTHUR CHARLES COLE.

URBANA, ILLINOIS,
February, 1914.

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CHAPTER I.

THE PERIOD OF ORIGINS, 1830-1835.

The national Whig party can truly be regarded as the logical successor of the old Federalist and National Republican parties. Behind the measures eventually brought forward by Whig leaders, there was a fundamental interpretation of governmental powers and relations similar, in all essentials, to the principles which governed Hamilton and his associates in formulating the Federalist policies. So also Clay's controlling personality assures us of the existence of this same relationship between the two parties with which his name is so closely connected.

The strength of these earlier parties, especially the National Republican, was essentially sectional and largely confined to the northern and central states.¹ Economic conditions and interests made them the natural strongholds for parties holding nationalist and federalist doctrines. In the South, however, prevailing interests made strict construction and state rights principles popular, a fact which tended to identify the political affiliations of the southern people with parties that occupied that ground. But the Whig party in the South constituted at all times a most powerful minority of the voting strength of that section, capable of being converted by unusual exertions and under favoring cir-

¹ Compare, however, Phillips, "The South Carolina Federalists", in *American Historical Review*, XIV, 529-543, 731-743, 776-790.

cumstances into at least a temporary majority. Various considerations linked in political alliance with the few southerners whose interests and inclinations led to the support of latitudinarian principles, a still larger faction made up of those who supported constitutional doctrines on the opposite extreme and whose logical interests generally seemed to point against such an affiliation. The early history of the party in the South is unified by the interesting set of problems which grew out of the need for the adjustment of these two wings to harmonious action. When once those problems seemed to be mastered, a similar division began in consequence of the slavery agitation which threatened to bring the party to a state of disorganization similar to that which characterized the first years of its existence. The history of the Whig party in the South is thus divided into two periods of nearly equal length, the campaign of 1844 serving as the period of transition which witnessed the solution of its first set of problems and brought into the arena a new set that was eventually to work the destruction of the national party.

In analyzing the elements included in the ranks of the southern Whig organization, it is natural to turn first to the advocates of the American system, but in the beginning their numbers were quite insignificant. In 1832 Clay carried Kentucky and Maryland and secured a fair vote in Louisiana and Virginia. On the other hand, Jackson was offered almost no opposition in Tennessee, Missouri, Mississippi, and Georgia. In his own state Clay had, of course, a large personal following. In addition the hemp interests there made friends for the tariff, while the need of communication and the river system of the state made popular the

policy of internal improvements by the national government.² These issues, together with the support of the United States bank, guaranteed to the American system the endorsement of a majority of the voting population of Kentucky. On the other hand the influence of such leaders as Crittenden is not to be underestimated. His friendship for Clay and support of his measures naturally had their influence with those who had as yet to decide on a party affiliation. It was of course less marked than the influence of Jackson and the political leaders in Tennessee, which, with interests very similar to those of her neighbor, had little direct support as yet to offer to the system. It was quite evident that the voters there were not allowed to think for themselves.³

Louisiana stood with those states which were strongly for the tariff. The sugar-planter of St. Landry—he was at the same time a manufacturer—reasoned that without the protection of the existing duty he could not sustain competition with the sugars of foreign colonies.⁴ He was also a judge of good banks; needing their assistance in his financial operations, he was careful to see that the state fostered only sound banking institutions, and valued the services which the branch of the national bank at New Orleans was able to offer him.

The interests of Maryland were so largely com-

² Note the excitement following the Maysville road veto. Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 277-281. Cf. A. T. Burnley to Crittenden, June 13, 1830: "What think you of Jackson's *veto*? Did you ever see such a state paper—wrong in principle, and clumsy in expression, it is a canting hypocritical electioneering document—intended to *fix* the allegiance of the South and Virginia—with as little offence as possible to the North and West." Crittenden MSS.

³ Knoxville *Republican*, quoted in *Niles' Register*, XLIII, 319.

⁴ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 293-299; see also *ibid.*, 256.

mercial that we can only expect to find her offering a strong support in return for the advantages which she gained from Clay's measures. The strength of the American system in Virginia lay largely in the west and in the commercial districts as well along the Potomac as in the tidewater region.⁵ The counties along the Ohio and the Great Kanawha were primarily interested in wool-growing and in the salt industry; at the same time it was thought that there were possibilities for extensive manufacturing there in the future.⁶ Along with protection were urged appropriations for internal improvement schemes which were always popular there, means of transportation being necessary to the development of the mineral resources of western Virginia.⁷ North Carolina at the time presented largely only possibilities. In the western part of the state there was a desire for internal improvements and a not unimportant pro-bank feeling. On the other hand, the anti-tariff sentiment in that section was, in the early thirties, even stronger. But there were reasonable hopes for an awakening in North Carolina; the situation there required only strong and active leaders and political events were soon to bring them forward. In the other southern states, anti-tariff feeling was all but unanimous while internal improvements and the bank had but a small and scattered following.⁸

The advocates of federal paternalism were, then, at the beginning of our period clearly in a minority in the southern states. Indeed, as the sectional self-conscious-

⁵ Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia*, *passim*, maps.

⁶ *Niles' Register*, XLV, 242; XLIX, 185.

⁷ Cf. petitions for internal improvements, *House Journal*, 21 Cong., 2 sess., 120, 162.

⁸ See *Niles' Register*, XLIII, 194, 220, etc. See also Mangum MSS.

ness of the South steadily developed, the cause of Clay and his system became daily more and more hopeless. Thus it would seem that if the Whig party of the thirties had been the nationalistic organization that it proved itself to be in its prime, it could scarcely have dreamed of success in the South. This idea, therefore, must at once be dismissed as untenable. Early whiggery was, in the South especially, quite a different thing from an endorsement of the measures for which Henry Clay stood. During the early years of the movement it never pretended to be more than an anti-Jackson-Van Buren or opposition party on a broad basis—a party hospitable to every faction that was willing to join the cause.

For, strangely enough, the nationalists were to find an element of strength in one of the greatest disadvantages from which they suffered—namely, in the fact that they were now out of touch with the federal administration. Regarded with contempt by the party in power, they were powerless to do more than offer a feeble and futile opposition to it until circumstances linked them in common cause against Jackson with allies who, though on the opposite extreme in constitutional interpretation, were soon ready for any policy by which they might break the power of the president. The addition of these new elements for the Whig coalition that was soon to form was made possible by schism in the ranks of those who had raised Jackson to the presidency. It is important that the first faction to break from earlier associations was the one that was led by political exigencies to carry its doctrines of strict construction and the sovereignty of the states to their utmost extremity.

State rights doctrines had long found a stronghold in the South. It was in the South that Jefferson and Madison had promulgated the doctrines of the Republican party of 1798 in the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions. Jefferson, moreover, had continued to be the champion of these principles in the old Dominion during the succeeding decades, when events tended to force that interpretation of federal relations into the background. With him cooperated John Randolph of Roanoke, while Nathaniel Macon actively directed the particularistic forces in the neighboring state of North Carolina. In South Carolina and Georgia the want of such leaders, combined with other causes, made the period from 1798 to the early twenties one of comparative inactivity as far as the development of state rights theories there was concerned.⁹

Amid the fervent outburst of nationalism that followed the War of 1812 it was apparently in vain that such southern leaders as Macon endeavored to rouse the South to the dangers of a liberal construction of the constitution. It was a sectional appeal; for, as Macon pointed out, "The states having no slaves may not feel as strongly, as the states having slaves about stretching the constitution; because no such interest is to be touched by it." There was logic in his argument that "if Congress can make banks, roads, and canals under the constitution, they can free any slave in the United States"; but it was logic which southerners seemed for the time to fail to appreciate.¹⁰

⁹ Phillips, *Georgia and State Rights*, 98-116; Houston, *Nullification in South Carolina*, 6-7.

¹⁰ See Macon's letters to Bartlett Yancey, dated March 8, April 15, 1818, Dec. 26, 1824, Dec. 8, 1825; Wilson, *Congressional Career of Nathaniel Macon*, 46-47, 49, 72, 76.

When, however, the insistent demand of the manufacturing states to the north for protection to American industry brought the beginning of a high tariff system, a revival and development of strict construction and particularistic doctrines took place. The South then found itself forced to contribute toward a cause in which it had no material interest. As soon as the logical results of this situation were realized, able leaders stepped forward to protect the interests of their section by appealing to the rights of the individual states. Floyd, Tazewell, and Tyler in Virginia, together with Hayne of South Carolina and men like Mangum of North Carolina and Gilmer and Berrien of Georgia, labored with Macon and Randolph to check the progress of the American system on account of the heavy burdens it was placing on the South. They were soon denying the constitutionality of the various measures which were put forward despite the growing opposition of the planting states. It remained but for Calhoun, following the already radical lead of South Carolina, to evolve a remedy by which, though claiming not to have gone an inch beyond the opinions of the Republican party of 1798,¹¹ he was led to the extremes of particularism. At once he became the champion of the "adhesive rights of southern freemen". His theory of nullification was to provide a certain solution when everything else had failed. His doctrines spread rapidly through the southern Atlantic states and also into Alabama and Mississippi.¹²

With Calhoun in the vice-presidential chair and with evidences of friendship from President Jackson at the

¹¹ *Calhoun Correspondence*, ed. Jameson, 298.

¹² *Ibid.*, 302-303. Cf. letters in Mangum MSS., Duff Green MSS., Floyd MSS., etc.

opening of his first administration the southern particularists had very natural hopes of strengthening their position. The "tariff of abominations" had greatly added to their following, and local issues, as the Creek Indian difficulties in Georgia, had led to frequent assertions of the reserved rights of the states and sometimes to open defiance of the claims of the general government.¹³ Jackson had led many to believe that he was decidedly friendly to the particularist cause from his course in regard to the controversy between Georgia and the Cherokees.¹⁴ In 1830 the nullifiers of South Carolina were claiming him as their friend.¹⁵ But suspicion was aroused when his administration brought about the fulfillment of none of the cherished hopes of the southern state rights leaders. In spite of their protests, the bank, the tariff, and the judiciary remained as engines of oppression to crush to earth the people of the South.¹⁶ Calhoun early became dissatisfied with the halting course of his chief which to him clearly did not seem to help toward a cordial union of the South for a redress of grievances. In the spring of 1830, at the close of the first year of their joint administration, a bitter personal controversy brought to an end all friendly relations between the two men.¹⁷ When the cabinet was reorganized in the summer of 1831, Calhoun saw his friends swept from the favor of the

¹³ *Niles' Register*, XXXII, 16; Ames, *State Documents on Federal Relations*, 113-124.

¹⁴ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 329, 331.

¹⁵ Poinsett to Jackson, Oct. 23, 1830, Poinsett MSS.

¹⁶ *Southern Times*, March 15, 1831, quoted in *Niles' Register*, XL, 104-106.

¹⁷ See correspondence in Shipp, *Life and Times of Wm. H. Crawford*, 208-209, 238-250; *Calhoun Correspondence*, 260, ff.

administration and the southern influence greatly diminished in the new organization.¹⁸ His hopes were blighted and he and his following became the most bitter of the opposition.¹⁹ Jackson had become "the greatest impediment in the march of principle in the Southern States".²⁰ At once Calhoun began to urge a "return to the Whig doctrines of '98" which at an earlier period of our history had "effected so salutary a change in our Government",²¹ hoping that they might act as a check upon "that corrupt knot" that had got hold of power. Considerable sentiment developed in the south Atlantic states in favor of Calhoun's candidacy for the presidency and in opposition to Jackson's reelection.²²

Jackson's overwhelming popularity in the South seems to have rested upon a somewhat artificial basis. Political parties there had for some time been in substantial agreement on questions of national policy, while local divisions were largely the result of the personal followings of the rival leaders. Jackson had been supported by the planters with the expectation that he would be a fair champion of the political opinion of

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 291.

¹⁹ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 327. Governor John Floyd of Virginia, having been "thrown overboard" by Jackson, openly declared war upon him, promising if reelected to play Macduff to Jackson's Macbeth. Floyd to Colonel John Williams, Dec. 27, 1830. He believed that Jackson had adopted latitudinarian principles: "To my chagrin and mortification, every principle, and every power claimed by Adams and Clay, as belonging to the Federal Government, has been acted on, or claimed by President Jackson." Floyd to J. S. Barbour, June 24, 1831, Floyd MSS.

²⁰ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 319.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 317, 318.

²² M. Jones to Mangum, Dec. 21, 1831, Mangum MSS. Floyd to Calhoun, April 16, 1831, Floyd MSS.

most of the voters of his section. But many were mere eleventh hour converts following the majority sentiment in his favor with a good deal of reluctance. Though they feared that peculiar type of democracy of which Jackson was so truly representative, they preferred him in 1828 to Adams and later to Clay, since they were the only other alternatives and he the lesser evil.²³ This was especially true of those who had in the presidential election of 1824 supported William H. Crawford of Georgia, a southerner who himself preferred and would have chosen his bitter adversary, John Quincy Adams with his reputed "federalism," over the popular Tennessean.²⁴

When, therefore, Jackson as president of the United States was called upon to consider the interests of all sections, it became an impossibility to live up to the expectations of all southerners. Many of them noted with dismay that the confidence of the administration was given to Van Buren and other northern politicians and believed that Jackson had readily embraced all their feelings and views.²⁵ Accordingly, his first term was hardly under way when the seeds of indifference and discontent began to germinate in the southern

²³ Floyd of Virginia analyzed the motives of Jackson's supporters in a letter to J. S. Barbour, June 24, 1831. He declared that most of them embraced his cause as a reward for his military services, while many did so from "dislike of Henry Clay and fear of his political principles". He could "see no difference between the Princely Purple and the Blackguard Black". Floyd MSS.

²⁴ Crawford to Clay, Feb. 4, 1828, Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 192.

²⁵ Floyd to Colonel John Williams, Dec. 27, 1830. In a letter to Senator L. W. Tazewell, dated May 31, 1832, Floyd declared that he had an early premonition of a division in the Jackson party: "Why I thought there would be a division was that I knew Jackson to be a coarse, vulgar man in his feelings, and had chosen the base part of his party to counsel and advise." Floyd MSS.

states²⁶ and open dissatisfaction to appear among southern representatives at Washington.²⁷

This discontent was increased by developments that came in 1832. The clamor of southern dissatisfaction with the tariff policy of the country was daily growing louder and the determination became more and more decisive not to endure any legislation in the direction of further protection. Some southerners were unable to decide as to just where Jackson stood on the matter of the tariff; ²⁸ others definitely understood that he was a supporter of the principle of protection; both groups were dissatisfied with the position that he was occupying. Mangum of North Carolina declared upon the floor of the Senate that the South had long known the president to be in favor of a protective system: "Loving him as we did, admiring him as we must, revering him as we ought, and confiding in him as we still delight to do, we, nevertheless, always remembered his opinions on this subject, with great regret. . . . The sentiment is growing in the South, and I trust will grow more and more, that we will wear in our hearts no love for any administration, that compels us to wear the chains of this system."²⁹

Opposition to the new tariff measure had been utterly

²⁶ When the editorial management of the *Natchez Gazette* was changed in November, 1830, the new editor announced his intention of giving the administration his active support, explaining his policy thus: "For there is, we believe, but one or two journals in the State that have taken a decided stand in its defence, or even given a full and impartial history of its proceedings." *United States Telegraph*, Nov. 24, 1830.

²⁷ Duff Green to R. K. Crallé, Dec. 5, 1831, Duff Green MSS.

²⁸ I. Iredell to Mangum, Feb. 4, 1832: "Why does not General Jackson *come out* upon it! Why is this studied equivocation in all his messages—who can understand on which side he is?" Mangum MSS.

²⁹ *Register of Debates*, 22 Cong., 1 sess., I, 327.

unavailing; its enactment, however, led to proposals for the cooperation of the people of the whole South. Self-redress was talked of as the only remaining remedy for the oppression. Calhoun's doctrines naturally became very popular. Many southern politicians had already taken sides with him in his strictures on the administration.³⁰ In Mississippi, Quitman had declared himself for Calhoun and in the summer of 1831 had organized state rights associations in a few counties there.³¹ The passage of the tariff gave an occasion for the redoubling of energies. Duff Green urged the Calhoun supporters in Virginia "to adopt the model of South Carolina and organize WHIG clubs" in every county: "Take the Whig principles of '98, the creed of Jefferson, opposition to the tariff, etc., as your text." Again, "If we organize Whig clubs in opposition to Van Buren and the tariff, and rally around the constitution . . . we will lead the people back to first principles and cure the sea of Jacksonism without seeming to assail it".³² Within a sixmonth Green was making an appeal to the whole nation on a broader basis, laying entire stress on common cause against Jackson.

Confidence in Jackson was becoming impaired; his word no longer had its accustomed influence. In the heat of the campaign of 1832 a strong movement in opposition to Van Buren, whom Jackson had designated for the vice-presidency, took place in Virginia, the Carolinas, Alabama, and Mississippi.

Seldom has a leader stirred up such universal animosity in the South with seemingly so little provocation as

³⁰ Claiborne, *Life of Quitman*, I, 108.

³¹ *Ibid.*, III.

³² Green to R. K. Crallé, March 12, 28, 1832, Duff Green MSS. The highest honor that Green could do a man was to call him a "Whig of the school of '98".

Van Buren had even by the summer of 1832. Southerners had become suspicious of him from the time that Jackson had given him the chief seat in his cabinet and with it his entire confidence. They seem to have taken a strong dislike to him as a "New York politician". This feeling was shared even by many of Van Buren's personal friends who hailed from the southern states;³³ it increased as the rumor spread that Jackson proposed to make Van Buren his successor. For it was known to some of the state rights leaders before the end of 1830 that Jackson counted on Van Buren's nomination for the vice-presidency and was planning to resign and retire in his favor shortly after his own reelection.³⁴ This hatred of Van Buren was especially intense in the state of South Carolina.³⁵ Calhoun and his friends saw in the situation in the early part of 1832 an opportunity of dividing the Jackson party in the South by making an issue over the ratification of the appointment of Van Buren as minister to England.³⁶ This, combined with other causes, led to his rejection by the Senate.³⁷ The mere suggestion of Van Buren's nomination for the vice-presidency was found to be enough to raise

³³ J. Iredell to Mangum, Feb. 4, 1832, Mangum MSS.

³⁴ Floyd to Colonel John Williams, Dec. 27, 1830, Floyd MSS. Cf. Jackson to Van Buren, Dec. 6, 1831, Van Buren MSS.

³⁵ See Jackson to Van Buren, Nov. 3, 1832, Van Buren MSS.

³⁶ Green to R. K. Crallé, Jan. 3, 1832, Duff Green MSS. Cf. J. A. Hamilton to Van Buren, Feb. 12, 1832, Van Buren MSS.

³⁷ W. S. Archer, a Virginia Jackson supporter, wrote to Crittenden, July 8, 1832, that there was only one consideration which would induce him to take the mission to England: "It is if there be no other mode of preventing its being given to the most despicable of all the Protegees of the Kitchen Cabinet." Crittenden MSS. Archer later requested a friend to make it perfectly plain to Van Buren that, while supporting the administration, he had no personal regard for the latter. Cf. C. C. Cambreleng to Van Buren, Dec. 26, 1832; Van Buren to Cambreleng, Jan. 25, 1833, Van Buren MSS.

divisions in the Jackson ranks in the South and good Jackson men predicted that Van Buren could not get the vote of their states.³⁸ There was, moreover, a great deal of uncertainty as to, and much criticism of, the latter's views on the tariff and internal improvements.

The strict construction wing from the South tried to defeat the selection of the "little magician" in the Democratic national convention in May, offering Philip P. Barbour of Virginia as their candidate.³⁹ After Van Buren had been nominated, Henry A. Wise rose and declared before the convention: "I will not vote for your nominee for Vice-President, my vote will be cast for Philip P. Barbour of Virginia for that office."⁴⁰ Barbour's supporters generally refused to acquiesce in his formal rejection and organized a Jackson-Barbour movement which was warmly supported throughout the campaign. When at a late moment in the canvass Van Buren came forward with a public declaration in which he endorsed the views of Jackson on the tariff, internal improvements, and the bank, Barbour announced his withdrawal to preserve party unity.⁴¹ Many of his supporters, however, carried their convictions with them to the polls and registered their votes against the regular nominee.⁴²

The Calhoun forces came out boldly against Jackson himself. In August Duff Green, the editor of the

³⁸ John Martin to Mangum, March 16, 1832, Mangum MSS.

³⁹ *Niles' Register*, XLII, 235. Cf. Claiborne, *Life of Quitman*, I, 108.

⁴⁰ Hambleton, *Virginia Politics*, xv. Cf. Wise, *Life of Wise*, 35.

⁴¹ *Niles' Register*, XLIII, 153. On this movement see *id.*, XLII, 283, 339, 405, 406; XLIII, 86, 116, 124-127, 153.

⁴² Cf. *ibid.*, 215. Duff Green, however, condemned Barbour for his course. "He is unworthy of our support", he wrote to Crallé, Aug. 3, 1832, "Let him go, he will defile you—He is sold to the Kitchen Cabinet." Duff Green MSS.

United States Telegraph, was convinced that it was now possible to prevent the president's reelection; hence he announced his intention to work for that end. Jackson was charged with having violated every principle upon which his election had originally been advocated.⁴³

The attempt was made to weaken Jackson as much as possible by opposition from two different directions, for Clay was already actively in the field as the candidate of the National Republicans. It is interesting to note the tendency of these extremes, the Clay and the Calhoun forces, which it pleased Jackson to designate "these antipodes in politics",⁴⁴ to regard themselves as working in a common cause. The local leaders of the two factions at various times discussed the possibility of cooperation,⁴⁵ while each of the two political giants adopted a cautious policy of trying to conciliate the adherents of the other and to attract them to their respective standards. A basis for friendly relations existed in a common desire to break down the power of Jackson. At the opening of Congress in December, 1831, it was rumored that Clay and Calhoun had come to an agreement about the tariff, and Jackson was prepared to see them unite with the aim of destroying him.⁴⁶ Although this did not happen, with the opening of the presidential campaign the friends of Clay expressed a willingness to see Calhoun enter the contest, while Calhoun's friends expressed a preference

⁴³ *U. S. Telegraph*, Aug. 23, 1832.

⁴⁴ Jackson to Van Buren, Dec. 6, 17, 1831, Van Buren MSS.

⁴⁵ John Floyd to Calhoun, April 16, 1831; Floyd to Colonel John Williams, Dec. 27, 1830, Floyd MSS.; A. T. Burnley to Crittenden, June 13, 1830, Crittenden MSS.

⁴⁶ Jackson to Van Buren, Dec. 6, 17, 1831, Van Buren MSS.

for the election of Clay rather than of Jackson.⁴⁷ Some of the leading Calhoun workers even advised the cooperation of the opposition in all sections.⁴⁸ The result of the election, however, showed that Jackson himself had not lost his hold on the southern voters. He could have suffered a much greater loss without his success having been in any way endangered.

But the country had been facing a situation much more critical than a presidential contest. The South had met the new tariff measure with open defiance. Anti-tariff and free trade sentiments were expressed in the language of nullification and state sovereignty. South Carolina was turning toward the final remedy which she said existed in the reserved rights of the states. When her legislature proceeded to declare its official sanction of the nullification doctrine and to prepare to enforce it in opposition to the authority of the general government, the executive of the nation was

⁴⁷ "I find a strong predisposition to Calhoun among Clay's and Wirt's friends. If we can dispose of the tariff all will go well." Green to Crallé, undated, 1832. Cf. letter of April 6, 1832, Duff Green MSS.

Governor Floyd of Virginia came gradually to prefer Clay's success "not from love of him, but the increasing disgust of Jackson". See his letter of Jan. 2, 1832, Floyd MSS. Duff Green, too, declared that, while not himself in favor of Clay, "as it is Van Buren's policy to come in on the American system, I would prefer to trust Mr. Clay than Van Buren with power." To Crallé, Aug. 23, 1832, Duff Green MSS.

⁴⁸ *U. S. Telegraph*, Aug. 27, 1832. "What say you to the organization of a committee of correspondence of the disaffected Jackson men throughout the United States—say that they are organized as Whig Clubs and opposed to the abuse of executive influence?" Green to Crallé, Aug. 3, 1832, Duff Green MSS.

Green wrote to his former adversary, J. H. Pleasants of the Richmond *Whig*, on Aug. 27, 1832: "We are no longer political opponents. We have a common object; and this is to defeat the election of Jackson; to break down the corrupt influence which now administers the Govt. in his name. . . . There is no reason why the friends of Mr. Calhoun, indeed why any southern man maintaining southern principles should prefer Gen. Jackson to Mr. Clay." *Ibid.*

forced to show his hand. Jackson was prepared to meet the crisis.⁴⁹ This he did in his celebrated proclamation which promptly, as was intended, removed all doubt as to his views. It was at once pointed out that the principles embodied closely followed the doctrines advanced by Webster in his reply to Hayne.⁵⁰

The nullifiers found themselves met with resolute and unexpected determination. The situation was so far from agreeable to them that the reception of the proclamation is worthy of note. It was denounced as a specimen of western bullying, as "the federal manifesto", the "tyrannical edict" of "King Andrew".⁵¹ The *Charleston Mercury*, on the fifth of January, labelled it "a piece of the mosaic of consistent inconsistency, which has all along marked his professions and practice on the subject of State rights, the tariff, and nullification". As violent language as would be consistent with decency came from the nullifiers of Georgia. The *Augusta Courier* stamped upon Jackson the character of "*hypocrite, usurper, and tyrant*—the meanest and most palpable of hypocrites—the most daring, reckless and dangerous of usurpers—and the most self-willed, heartless and bloody of tyrants".⁵² Such words could only mean a complete breach with Jackson and Jacksonism.

The nullifiers formed themselves *en masse* into an anti-Jackson party. They took for themselves the appellation of "whigs",⁵³ a term which had been in their

⁴⁹ Of this the state rights leaders were not unaware; see Green to Crallé, Nov. 16, 1832, Duff Green MSS.

⁵⁰ *Niles' Register*, XLIII, 286.

⁵¹ Comments from the *Charleston Mercury* and *Columbia Telescope* quoted in *ibid.*, 267; cf. *ibid.*, 288, 331.

⁵² *Augusta Courier*, quoted in *Niles' Register*, XLIII, 345.

⁵³ *Niles' Register*, XLIII, 287.

minds while considering the recent usurpations and which, as has been seen, had been favorably commended to them by their leaders in directing the formation of state rights organizations. At the same time they tried to fix upon their opponents, the Jackson Union men, the stigma of "tories"—thus to bring them into disrepute. A correspondent of the *Charleston Mercury* proposed that "all the printers throughout the State, shall designate the friends of the State by the proud name of WHIGS, and the friends of ANDREW JACKSON and of consolidation by the name of TORIES. . . . Every man now in South Carolina is a whig or a tory".⁵⁴ This revival of the term "whig", as applied to a political party, or, more properly at this point, a political faction, is not without significance. It inevitably suggests a southern origin for the use of the name by the united opposition a few years later. Being brought so prominently before the public eye, it must have had its influence upon this more general application when other events had occurred to intensify the bitterness of the anti-Jackson elements in all sections of the country. It seems clear that the use of the name "whig" in reference to the opposition in the northern states a year later was but an extension of what had been begun in these exciting times in South Carolina, that it was not in its origin a deliberate change of name by the followers of Clay. The arguments applied in 1833 were the same as those of Clay and Calhoun in the Senate in 1834, when they pointed out the analogy to the situation in England where the Tories were traditionally the supporters of the executive power and royal prerogative and the Whigs the champions of liberty.

⁵⁴ *Charleston Mercury*, Dec. 17, 1832.

But Jackson's proclamation did more than manifest the resolution of the president to put down practical nullification in South Carolina; more than reiterate the sentiment of his toast at the Jefferson dinner: "Our *Federal Union; it must be preserved.*" It was at once seen to be an elaborate commentary on the constitution. As such, its friends and critics felt that it sustained the views of those who had been contending for liberal construction.⁵⁵ Criticisms on that basis soon came in from Jackson's earlier followers who, though by no means ready to endorse nullification, felt that he had gone too far. The Milledgeville *Southern Recorder* issued its warning that many of the views were such as would be repudiated "by the great republican party of the union, as utterly at war with some of the fundamental principles of their political creed". Given to choose between Jackson and their cherished state rights doctrines, many southerners did not hesitate to remain true to the latter. In Virginia especially was this true: there the practical nullifiers were weak in numbers but state rights doctrines met almost universal acceptance particularly in the eastern half of the state; to none of the voters in that section were the views of Jackson's proclamation very palatable. Niles pointed out that "it completely nullified the contracted and the starched theories of the '*Virginia school of politicians*'".⁵⁶ Vindication of the "ancient principles" of the state against the proclamation was inconsistent with continued support of Jackson.⁵⁷ The result was the growth of a formidable state rights party which, with the exception of

⁵⁵ *Niles' Register*, XLIII, 249; *Boston Gazette*, in *ibid.*, 286; Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, in *ibid.*, 345.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 249.

⁵⁷ *Richmond Whig*, in *ibid.*, 345.

a few extremists, aimed to voice a protest against the principles of the president's proclamation, while rejecting the remedy resorted to by South Carolina.⁵⁸

The attitude of some of the Virginia leaders calls for attention. Governor Floyd bitterly denounced "the disgusting prostitution of President Jackson".⁵⁹ When Senator Tyler considered the fate of his country should the principles of the proclamation prevail, "his language breathed the spirit of patriotism and the principles of '98".⁶⁰ John Randolph, the patriarch of Roanoke, jumped from his sick bed at the news of the proclamation and devoted the closing days of his long life to a busy campaign in which he denounced Jackson's stand in the loudest anathemas.⁶¹ The proclamation completed the alienation from Jackson of Bibb, Upshur, Gordon, and Tazewell.⁶² William S. Archer, who was still supporting the administration as part of his "public duty", believed and so informed Van Buren "that as to getting Virginia to adopt the President's proclamation doctrines it was out of the question—that you might rely upon it no matter who might say otherwise that the old fashioned doctrines would be sustained by an overwhelming vote".⁶³ When the news of the effect of the proclamation in their state reached General Gordon and Senator Tyler at Washington, "they both sprang up, caught each other in their arms

⁵⁸ Richmond *Whig*, in *Niles' Register*, XLIII, 285.

⁵⁹ Floyd to L. W. Tazewell, Dec. 28, 1832. Mrs. Floyd wrote to her husband from their home, Jan. 1, 1833, denouncing the president as "a bloody, bawdy, treacherous, lecherous villain. . . . There is an universal indignation amongst the women of the country at the President's course." Floyd MSS.

⁶⁰ C. A. Wickliffe to T. W. Gilmer, Dec. 15, 1832, *William and Mary Quarterly*, XV, 227-228.

⁶¹ Garland, *Life of John Randolph*, II, 359-362.

⁶² Tyler, *Letters and Times of the Tylers*, I, 476.

⁶³ C. C. Cambreleng to Van Buren, Dec. 26, 1832, Van Buren MSS.

and danced around the room like children in a delirium of joy".⁶⁴ The effect upon the popularity of the president was instantaneous. Many of his most ardent admirers at once deserted his standard, alienated by the wound which they claimed he had inflicted on the constitution and liberty.⁶⁵ The movement for state rights was strong enough to carry many National Republicans into its ranks: Pleasants, the editor of the *Richmond Whig*, became the staunch defender of state rights as he had been of the American system.⁶⁶ His rival, Ritchie of the *Enquirer*, was led by his friendship for Jackson to act as his apologist though even he could not approve of the principles he had voiced. Ritchie was ready to believe that the proclamation did not reflect the individual views of the president, that the argument was rather that of his secretary, and that his attitude toward the Virginia doctrines remained unchanged.⁶⁷ This was but one of the ways in which Jackson men reconciled their political beliefs with the continued support of their leader.

Jackson's popularity was fully put to the test and loyalty to him was the only force that restrained many from criticism and condemnation. Often in spite of apparent inconsistency they made their views conform to those of the president, dropping the South Carolina doctrines in hot haste and condemning as traitors the

⁶⁴ Green to Crallé, Dec. 15, 1832, Duff Green MSS.

⁶⁵ Cf. Tyler to Floyd, Jan. 16, 1833, Tyler MSS. General John Floyd, a Jackson elector in the last election, wrote to Governor Floyd under date of Jan. 3, 1833: "His *unlooked for—uncalled for—and ILL* timed proclamation . . . has *torn off the mask*, etc." Floyd MSS.

⁶⁶ Duff Green had only the highest praise for Pleasants and his work. He wrote to Crallé, Dec. 16, 1832: "The effect of his paper in the House of Reps was apparent in every countenance. The Whigs were congratulating each other." Cf. letter of Dec. 15, Duff Green MSS.

⁶⁷ *Niles' Register*, XLIII, 345.

leaders whose views they had recently prided themselves on following.⁶⁸ It is safe, however, to conclude that the great body of advanced state rights men were beyond reconciliation and that this meant a group large enough to weaken the hold of Jackson in the South. For what was true of Virginia was also true, more or less, of North Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi where state rights was strong and opposition to Jacksonism a growing force.⁶⁹ There the threat of coercion had the effect of fostering nullification and of giving it a prestige with some that all the arguments of Calhoun could not have accomplished. Those whose consciences could not be satisfied with an adaptation of Madison's interpretation of the Virginia report and resolutions of 1798 were inevitably led in that direction. The proclamation gave the death blow to many a southerner's Jacksonism.

The nation was facing a crisis. Each side had shown its hand and was now waiting for the other to act; it remained to be seen whether the controversy would have to be settled by the force of arms. Certain facts made this decidedly improbable. Jackson, to be sure, had requested further provision for carrying out the principles laid down in his proclamation, out of which grew the force bill or "bloody bill", a *brutum fulmen* which was received in the South with no less hostility than had been manifested toward the executive mani-

⁶⁸ Knoxville *Republican*, in *ibid.*, 319. Henry A. Wise opposed the "Federal heresies" of the proclamation on the one hand and on the other the remedies of South Carolina. He therefore continued his support of the administration. Hambleton, *Virginia Politics*, xvii-xviii; Wise, *Life of Wise*, 37-40. Cf. R. E. Parker to Van Buren, March 21, 1833, Van Buren MSS.

⁶⁹ Green to Crallé, Dec. 15, 1832, Duff Green MSS. [E. J. Hale] to Mangum, Jan. 20, 1833, etc., Mangum MSS.

festó. But the olive branch was just as sure to be extended in the other hand. The administration was itself prepared to offer a tariff measure which was intended to tranquillize the South.⁷⁰

There was one man who was ready at this time to play the part of a compromiser—that man was Henry Clay. He had within the past year tried to effect an amicable adjustment of the tariff, but had failed in his resolution of 1832 to go far enough to satisfy the South and its leaders. The election that followed had taught him the necessity of building up his strength in the southern states, which suggested further concessions in the matter of the tariff. He was indeed planning some such service as he prepared to leave his home at Ashland for the coming session of Congress.⁷¹ As Crittenden had pointed out to Clay before the enactment of the tariff of 1832, a reduction of duties was not only consistent with the principle of protection when the reduction affected manufactures which were already established on a firm and permanent basis but such a policy would even demonstrate the soundness of the protectionist principle, in making possible the announcement that it had accomplished the very results that had been claimed for it.⁷² Crittenden was but one of those who had been urging upon him such a peace offering to conciliate the opponents of the tariff in the present crisis.

John Randolph in his speeches against the president's proclamation pointed to Clay as the only man who could

⁷⁰ See Jackson MSS. and Van Buren MSS., especially C. C. Cambreleng to Van Buren, Dec. 29, 1832.

⁷¹ See Crittenden to Clay, Nov. 24, 1832; Clay to Crittenden, Nov. 28, 1832, Crittenden MSS.

⁷² Crittenden to Clay, Feb. 23, 1832, Crittenden MSS.

save the Union; he even credited him with patriotism equal to the occasion.⁷³ The state rights men naturally turned to him for the expected relief. They were above all else unwilling to accept it from the administration. Accordingly, immediately after the publication of the proclamation, Tyler had gone to Clay and earnestly consulted with him and his friends as to the situation, making a strong appeal to their patriotism. They arranged for consultations between Calhoun and Clay, which were held and in which the compromise tariff bill was doubtless agreed upon. It would seem that the scheme emanated from the great South Carolinian or one of his state rights friends. Calhoun had no desire for a sudden reduction which he saw would work havoc with the manufacturers of the nation,⁷⁴ and the periodical reduction scheme is just such a one as we should expect from him. Clay, on the other hand, would naturally desire the reduction to be on the principle of the protective policy. At any rate, Tyler gave a careful description of just such a tariff arrangement as was finally adopted to his friend Governor Floyd, in a letter dated the tenth of January, 1833, pointing out that "the principle of protection is to be utterly abandoned".⁷⁵ Six days later, he told him to expect to see Clay come to the support of Calhoun, closing with the news, "All prospect of settling the tariff except through Clay is gone—From him I still have hope—If he strikes at all, it will be at a critical moment".⁷⁶ Four weeks later Clay rose in the Senate to announce the great

⁷³ Garland, *Life of Randolph*, II, 362.

⁷⁴ *Niles' Register*, LI, 78.

⁷⁵ "The battle is fought and won", he declared. Floyd MSS.

⁷⁶ Tyler to Floyd, Jan. 16, 1833, Tyler MSS.

measure of peace and reconciliation, to the intense gratification of the state rights leaders.⁷⁷

The nullifiers of South Carolina claimed the compromise tariff as a victory for their cause and for their principles. Duff Green declared in the *Telegraph* that nullification had triumphantly forced a settlement of the tariff question.⁷⁸ But the advocates of conservative particularism were filled with sincere gratitude toward Clay, ready to give him the full credit for having actually averted a civil war.⁷⁹ Some of them, regardless of differences on points of national policy, were even desirous of rewarding him at once with the nomination for the presidency.⁸⁰

The nullification excitement had hardly begun to subside before developments in Jackson's war on the United States Bank stirred up general excitement throughout the country. As has been seen, the national bank was not without its friends in the South. Even many anti-tariff state rights men there had favored a renewal of the charter, having come to "regard the

⁷⁷ Tyler in a speech on April 12, 1860, described the scene following Clay's resolution: "I occupied an extreme seat on the left, he a similar seat on the right of the Senate chamber. We advanced to meet each other, and grasped each other's hands midway the chamber. It is that grasp of hand which has brought me here to-day. It is that noble act which immortalized the name of Henry Clay." *National Intelligencer*, April 24, 1860. For further information cf. Clay to Clayton, Aug. 22, 1844, Clayton MSS., printed in *Niles' Register*, LXVII, 30.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Charleston Mercury*, March 5, 1833, in *Niles' Register*, XLIV, 43; *U. S. Telegraph*, *ibid.*, 33. See also speech of Calhoun, *id.*, LIV, 199.

⁷⁹ Tyler wrote to Governor Floyd, Nov. 21, 1833, advising him as to his message: "The measures of last winter will necessarily pass in review before you which will afford you an opportunity of paying a just compliment to Clay, and thereby greatly conciliate his friends. Would it be going too far to represent him as having rescued us from civil war, when those who held or ought to have held our destinies in their hands talked only of swords and halters—Such is my deliberate opinion." Tyler MSS.

⁸⁰ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 362.

continuance of that institution as of almost indispensable necessity".⁸¹ Cotton planters benefited by its loans in handling the "snowy staple of the South" and were unwilling to see commercial facilities impaired. United States Bank stock, moreover, was regarded in the South as a profitable investment.⁸² It was regretted that the question of recharter had been brought up at the beginning of the presidential canvass at a time when Jackson, who might otherwise have given his approval, was sure to regard it as a test of strength to measure his popularity against that of the bank.⁸³ Accordingly, when the bank bill of July, 1832, was sent up to President Jackson and he met it with a veto, his action and the reasons assigned for it called forth much criticism,⁸⁴ although many felt that the situation demanded the endorsement of the president's action. In the campaign, friends of the bank in Mississippi proposed to waive all other issues and to nominate an electoral ticket favorable to a

⁸¹ Mangum to Wm. Gaston, Jan. 19, 1832, Mangum MSS. "Whether right or wrong, that Bank is at this time very popular in our State—I believe, indeed I know, it has done us vast good and as yet we have felt no evils from it. Where is the check upon the State banks if it is not to be found here?" J. Iredell to Mangum, Feb. 4, 1832, *ibid.*

"For my part although a strict State rights man (even unto nullification if you please) I could never see any constitutional objection to a Bk. established by Congress." J. A. Berie to Mangum, April 11, 1834, *ibid.*

"Senator Poindexter is a Nullifying State Rights man—and yet he advocates the National Bank, which the first friends of State Rights denounced as unwarranted by the Constitution!" Richmond *Enquirer*, in *U. S. Telegraph*, Jan. 4, 1834. See also Shipp, *Life and Times of Wm. H. Crawford*, 206-207; *Niles' Register*, LVI, 225.

⁸² Wm. Polk to Mangum, Feb. 1, 1832, Mangum MSS.

⁸³ Mangum to Wm. Gaston, Jan. 19, 1832, *ibid.* See Mangum to Wm. Polk, Feb. 11, 1832, Wm. Polk MSS.

⁸⁴ W. R. Hinton, elector on the Jackson-Barbour ticket in North Carolina, refused to support Jackson after his veto. He regarded the bank as "inseparably connected with the prosperity of the Union, and indispensable to the preservation of a sound currency". Raleigh *Register*, July 27, 1832, in *Niles' Register*, XLII, 406-407.

renewal of the charter.⁸⁵ Some southerners, too, who did not support the proposition for the continuance of the existing institution, favored a restricted new charter.⁸⁶

But Jackson was not satisfied with simply having prevented a renewal of the charter. The next step in the bank war was the removal of the government deposits from the custody of the bank in the fall of 1833. It was met by a loud note of protest from the South, though, perhaps, not as strong as that from the commercial states of the North. This protest was, at the start, based on constitutional grounds, the removal being branded as an unauthorized usurpation of the executive. "The President himself has nullified", it was declared, "a Secretary of the Treasury, and the charter of a bank—a solemn contract between the stockholders of that institution, and the government of which he is the agent."⁸⁷ Soon, however, the effect of the removal of the deposits began to be felt in the South as at least a contributory cause of the deranged currency and of the unsettled condition of exchange, which soon led to a fall in prices in general, with an especial depression of the cotton market, and a serious money pressure.⁸⁸ This was increased when the United States Bank began to curtail its discounts, to call in loans, and to take the necessary steps preparatory to the final adjustment of its affairs.⁸⁹ It was inevitable that the people should begin to lose their blind confidence in Jackson, who, as president, had not stopped to consider the con-

⁸⁵ Claiborne, *Life of Quitman*, I, 131.

⁸⁶ S. F. Patterson to Mangum, March 1, 1832, Mangum MSS. Cf. Mangum to Wm. Polk, Feb. 11, 1832, Wm. Polk MSS.

⁸⁷ *U. S. Telegraph*, Jan. 11, 1834; cf. *id.*, Jan. 2.

⁸⁸ *Id.*, Jan. 2, 6, 8, 15, 28, Feb. 25, 1834.

⁸⁹ A. Porter to B. H. Harrison, June 9, 1834, Porter MSS.

sequences of an act which, it was pointed out, could only have been dictated by political considerations, in all probability by his anxiety for the political future of Martin Van Buren in the strife for the presidential succession.⁹⁰ "The people—the South especially—", declared the Richmond *Whig*, "have already paid, in part, the penalty of their blind partiality and irrational idolatry of General Jackson, in the overthrow of their principles, and the remainder of the penalty will now be exacted, *out of their purses*."⁹¹

The inevitable result was a period of tremendous excitement. Bitter condemnation was expressed in the South in public meetings,⁹² in petitions to Congress, and in legislative resolutions. The Virginia, Kentucky, and Louisiana legislatures officially voiced the sentiment of disapproval in those states of the removal of the deposits. An active minority in the Alabama and North Carolina legislatures labored to force through resolutions for a recharter of the bank.⁹³ The removal of the deposits completely revolutionized the politics of Virginia. Whereas its legislature had begun the session of 1833-1834 with practically a two-thirds administration majority, within three months the situation had

⁹⁰ *U. S. Telegraph*, Jan. 2, 8, 1834. Cf. James Love to Crittenden, May 27, 1834, Crittenden MSS.

⁹¹ *U. S. Telegraph*, Jan. 6, 1834. "It is the pecuniary embarrassment, the great and overwhelming distress consequent upon the removal of the deposits; which comes home to the people. It is this and this alone I believe which has removed the film from the eyes of the people. It has appeared to me that nothing short of touching the pocket and that rudely would induce the people or any considerable portion of them to doubt the infallibility of Jacksonism." S. Hillman to Mangum, Feb. 16, 1834, Mangum MSS.

⁹² At a meeting at Baltimore, resolutions were passed for the formation of a "State Whig Society". *Niles' Register*, XLVI, 130.

⁹³ *U. S. Telegraph*, Jan. 4, 1834; W. Montgomery to Mangum, Dec. 27, 1833, Mangum MSS.

become completely reversed ; its delegation to Congress held a caucus and found itself all but unanimously in favor of the restoration of the deposits to the bank ; while public opinion was represented as overwhelmingly anti-Jackson.⁹⁴ There was generally throughout the South a strong current of popular opinion in violent opposition to the position of the administration. "The administration had made their calculations", announced a member of Congress from Kentucky, "that the hostility of the South to the Bank, and Virginia in particular, would make them overlook the right of the question—They have been deceived. Virginia has abandoned Jackson and cannot be recovered."⁹⁵ The ruinous losses suffered by many southerners doubtless "added to the detestation felt by 'the best people' for the Democratic principles and theories".⁹⁶

The opposition in Congress kept up effective cooperation in the common cause of checking what they termed the arbitrary encroachments and usurpations of the executive, of remedying abuses which threatened "to absorb all the powers of Government in one, and to give to the country a self-willed despot in place of a constitutional President".⁹⁷ Calhoun and Tyler worked enthusiastically with Clay and Webster to administer a rebuke to the determined president ; by their united

⁹⁴ *Richmond Whig*, in *U. S. Telegraph*, Jan. 14, Feb. 25, 1834; *id.*, Jan. 10.

⁹⁵ James Love to Crittenden, May 27, 1834, Crittenden MSS. "As far as I can hear, the Jackson party is staggering in every direction." J. T. Morehead to Crittenden, May 17, 1834, *ibid.*

"The best opinion here [Washington] is that before two years all the States from Maryland to Alabama inclusive, will be found in opposition to Genl. Jackson, or rather to Van Buren." A. Porter to J. P. Harrison, Feb. 18, 1834, Porter MSS.

⁹⁶ *Memoir of Jefferson Davis*, by his wife, I, 190.

⁹⁷ *Baltimore Chronicle*, in *U. S. Telegraph*, Jan. 21, 1834.

efforts Clay's resolution of censure was carried through the Senate and Jackson's protest kept off the pages of the Senate journal.

Thus, in the spring of 1834, the national Whig party was born. Its parents were the anti-tariff and strict-construction "Whig" following, largely located in the South and under the leadership of Calhoun, and Clay's National Republican party. Four years before, when the attraction between these extremes was first noticeable, when both were young, impetuous, and immature, they had offered a mutual but vain resistance to the force which was drawing them together. There followed the timid courtship of the summer and fall of 1832; the result was the secret alliance of the following winter. If, indeed, it was a strange union, it was because it was dictated by political considerations; it never claimed to be a real love match. The offspring was of necessity a hybrid. Strangely enough, however, it was only during its infancy and youth that its characteristics betrayed its mongrel origin; when it reached maturity, the qualities inherited from the National Republican party asserted an absolute predominance.

The elements of the Whig party⁹⁸ were most heterogeneous—the leading and prominent men often held entirely opposite opinions and sentiments upon every important question of the period preceding the formation of the Whig coalition. Some were in favor of a

⁹⁸ It took the name which the opposition had assumed in the local contests in the states. It should be clear from the foregoing that the term was a favorite with the Calhoun leaders and was openly assumed and extensively used by their followers in South Carolina during the winter of 1832-1833. Later, the use of the term spread to other states, including New York and Connecticut, and soon had a general application to the anti-Jackson party. *Niles' Register*, XLVI, 101, 131; XLVII, 8-9. Cf., however, Sargent, *Public Men and Events*, I, 262.

protective tariff, others its most bitter opponents; some were for a United States bank, others against a bank of any kind; some were in favor of internal improvements, others strongly in doubt as to the constitutionality of such a move; besides these, there were some former nullifiers who could be expected to revive their doctrines upon the proper occasion. The Richmond *Whig* christened it "the ever memorable and blessed family compact which gave quiet to South Carolina, preserved the peace and integrity of the States and tempered the harsh operation of the tariff".⁹⁹ The name "whig" was regarded as a generic term embracing the united opposition. No attempt was made for some years at a formulation of principles and policies but its object stood out clearly from the beginning—to check Jackson and Jacksonian democracy, to "cure the sea of Jacksonism."

"There is a common cause for all the divisions of the Union, that should become paramount to every sectional object. What are the grievances of South Carolina now, compared with those of the nation? We appeal on this head to the speeches of Mr. McDuffie and Mr. Clay. The nullifiers of the South have always professed to cherish the Union. Well, then, it is now more in danger from the triumph of the Kitchen Cabinet, than any other circumstance. Whatever dispute remains between the Constitutionlists of the North and the quondam Nullifiers, may be settled when the common enemy is overthrown."¹⁰⁰ This was the spirit that animated those extremes which cooperated under the Whig banner.

⁹⁹ *National Intelligencer*, March 24, 1835.

¹⁰⁰ *National Gazette*, in *U. S. Telegraph*, Jan. 2, 1834.

The Whig party of the South was at this stage, then, a combination of former National Republicans, nullifiers and bona fide state rights men of milder stripe,¹⁰¹ and Democrats alienated from Jackson for various reasons, especially because of the removal of the deposits. They could all have been grouped loosely about either Clay or Calhoun. Recognizing the natural leadership of these two men, it is interesting to notice how they looked upon cooperation such as was essential to the common cause that had brought them together.

Calhoun had regarded Clay as a rival even before he had broken away from his former nationalistic ideas. When Adams was elected president in 1824 Calhoun is said to have tried to bargain with him to defeat the appointment of Clay to a seat in the cabinet, even offering in return the support of the administration by the South Carolina delegation.¹⁰² Calhoun came to think of Clay, the father of the American system, more and more as a mischief maker.¹⁰³ But when he found himself without influence in shaping the course of Jacksonian democracy, and finally at odds with the administration, he had to consider the possibility of another alignment. As Clay noted, South Carolina was rather too contracted a position for Calhoun to start from.¹⁰⁴ But he at first refused to think of a compact with Clay, deciding rather to stand aloof from existing party conflicts and to urge his followers to aim simply at a discharge of their duty of restoring the constitution.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ In the Carolinas, Virginia, and Georgia, it was sometimes still called the "State Rights" party or "State Rights Whig" party.

¹⁰² B. F. Perry, *Reminiscences*, 248-249.

¹⁰³ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 291.

¹⁰⁴ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 288.

¹⁰⁵ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 305, 310.

Shortly afterwards, however, he was making overtures to the friends of Clay in the South, bargaining to get the support of Virginia and the states which followed her lead in the presidential election, in return for which he agreed to leave a clear field for Clay should the election be thereby thrown into the House of Representatives.¹⁰⁶ When this scheme failed, he began to formulate a definite policy. He saw his state rights followers in 1833-1834 holding the balance of power in the Senate and capable of exerting a strong influence in the House; seeing their strength, he was led to the determination not to merge them into one of the great parties but to preserve their separate existence. He refused to make a choice of evils of that sort and decided that "if there is to be Union against the administration, it must be Union on our own ground"; "others may rally on us, but we rally on nothing but our doctrines".¹⁰⁷ This was not so discouraging to the idea of coalition after all. His gratification over the spread of state rights led him to exaggerate its strength; he predicted that within a few years it would be the political faith of the country and that it would be hailed as the great conservative principle of the nation.¹⁰⁸ He hoped that he would then be the one to dictate terms. The excitement following the removal of the deposits increased his confidence. He wrote to his brother: "A great political revolution is going on. The feeling of the North toward the South is rapidly reversing. We and our doctrines are daily growing in favour; and thousands who but a few months since execrated us,

¹⁰⁶ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 332-333.

¹⁰⁷ Calhoun *Correspondence*, 328, 330.

¹⁰⁸ Calhoun *Correspondence*, 331, 332; *Niles' Register*, XLIII, 57.

now look to the South, not only for protection against the usurpation of the Executive, but also against the needy and corrupt in their own section.”¹⁰⁹

So the spring of 1834 found Calhoun working harmoniously with the other great opposition leaders. On the floor of the Senate he boldly avowed himself a Whig, proud to act under a party designation which was synonymous to resistance to usurpation.¹¹⁰ But he had yielded little if anything. He was prepared to accept the National Republicans as opponents in case a crushing defeat for the Jackson and Van Buren party should eliminate it from the field.¹¹¹ He insisted that in the next presidential election the state rights party of the South would rally on no man who did not openly avow and support their doctrines. For the present he was offering his strongest opposition to executive usurpation and misrule but his explanation of executive usurpation was unique. He made it an occasion for elaborating his state rights doctrines, pointing out that such usurpation was the result of the encroachments of Congress upon the rights of the states and leading to the inevitable conclusion, “That it is only on the elevation and commanding position of state rights, that the

¹⁰⁹ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 331-332. For corroborating evidence see *U. S. Telegraph*, Jan. 1, 15, 25, Feb. 3, 4, 13, 17, 20, 25, 1834. “There is a feeling universally prevailing, that there is more danger to be apprehended from the Government becoming a monarchy than from nullification—that the centripetal power is much stronger than the centrifugal, and that the consolidation of all power in one person is eminently more dangerous than any nullification with which we have hitherto been threatened.” *Richmond Whig*, in *id.*, Jan. 6, 1834.

See also *Baltimore Chronicle*, in *id.*, Feb. 25, 1834; W. Roane to Mangum, June 5; C. P. Green to Mangum, March 1, 1836, Mangum MSS.

¹¹⁰ Calhoun, *Works*, II, 405.

¹¹¹ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 340, 343.

contest against executive usurpation can be permanently and successfully maintained".¹¹²

The course which circumstances compelled Clay to pursue shows that Calhoun's position had certain indisputable elements of strength. When in the height of the tariff controversy, the advocates of state sovereignty began to take the advanced ground of the nullification doctrine, Clay was not slow in seeing that it might have an important effect upon his political fortunes. As it weakened the strength of the administration, it was a preliminary move in his favor. But he feared that Jackson might counter-balance whatever advantage the situation gave him by taking a decisive course against the nullifiers and claiming the reward for saving the nation.¹¹³ Jackson, however, was slow in making known his attitude. This left Clay free to strengthen his position; he began to show a marked respect for state rights. While he refused to publish any exposition of his constitutional principles, he wrote to his friend, Francis Brooke, who was in communication with the Virginia state rights leaders: "I need not say to you that my constitutional doctrines are those of the epoch of 1798. I am against all power not delegated, or not necessary and proper to execute what is delegated. I hold to the principles of Mr. Madison, as promulgated through the Virginia legislature. I was with Mr. Madison then; I am with him now. I am against all nullification, all new lights in politics if not in religion. Applying the very principles of Mr. Madison's famous interpretation of the Constitution,

¹¹² *Niles' Register*, XLVI, 405-406. Cf. *id.*, XLIX, 198; *Calhoun Correspondence*, 338.

¹¹³ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 288.

in the Virginia address, I find in the Constitution the power to protect our industry and to improve our country by objects of a national character. I have never altered my [*sic*] constitutional opinion which I ever entertained, and publicly expressed but that in relation to the bank; and the experience of the last war changed mine, and almost every other person's, who had been against the power of chartering it."¹¹⁴

Clay was willing to see Calhoun, by mutual agreement, carry three or four southern states in 1832, hoping that they jointly might break the power of Jackson.¹¹⁵ He was shrewd enough to perceive that, acting alone, his chances of successful opposition were for the time few indeed; he further realized that, if he could but attract into a coalition enough former administration men from the South, he need no longer despair. Accordingly, he a little later found the views of Jackson's proclamation to be "too ultra" on the side of consolidation.¹¹⁶ In the crisis, when the eyes of the nation were fixed upon him in the hopes that he would offer a successful plan of settlement, he submitted in Congress a tariff arrangement which afforded South Carolina a chance to recover from her hazardous position. The state rights men, claiming that the American system had been broken up, urged new associations for the southern tariff men and recommended a reorganization of parties upon the old distinctions to combat the federalism of Jacksonism.¹¹⁷ Overtures were made to Clay to detach him from the northern nationalists.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 288.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 301.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 345.

¹¹⁷ G. M. Bibb to A. T. Burnley, April 5, 1833, Crittenden MSS.

¹¹⁸ Floyd to Wm. C. Preston, Nov. 23, 1833, Floyd MSS.

Taking into consideration the accompanying circumstances, there was clearly reasonable ground for the cry of coalition that went up and for the charge that Clay was bargaining away his principles upon the altar of ambition for southern support.¹¹⁹

Clay's attention was centered on the southern states where he watched the anti-Jackson forces steadily growing. He even favored the repeal of certain sections of the force bill as an expedient to tranquillize the South. One obstacle, however, loomed up before the Kentucky politician—that was Calhoun. He knew that the latter, as well as himself, was ambitious for high office, that the principles of the South Carolinian would force him to stand as a sectional candidate, and he was convinced from his experience in 1832 that he could himself least afford to lose votes in the South. Cooperation with Calhoun was naturally a source of great discomfort to Clay; he felt at times that the nullifiers were doing the cause but little good, but his political far-sightedness made him see that the opposition needed every accession of strength and that sound policy demanded that he and his following should sacrifice personal feelings in consideration of the great object to be gained.

Virginia was the only state where the state rights men and the former National Republicans were both present in sufficient numbers to require a definition of their mutual relations. There a sectional division of the state determined the situation for a time. The first inclination of Clay men in general to support the president's proclamation was modified by the powerful reac-

¹¹⁹ *Niles' Register*, XLIV, 234; Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 350; *U. S. Telegraph*, Jan. 4, 1834.

tion against that state paper, which resulted in the nationalists of the western section uniting with the Jackson men there to uphold it, while a majority of the voters of eastern Virginia, irrespective of former principles, joined the opposition. Such a coalition was natural even under the difficulties that existed, and the Clay men of the western counties joined this opposition in the east in condemning the arbitrary course of the executive with the public deposits. Indeed, the union of the nationalists and state rights men had made possible the resolutions of the legislature on this subject.¹²⁰

Meantime the news of each victory for the Whig party brought rejoicings from all the elements represented in it for the "glorious auspices which cheer and animate the friends of liberty from every quarter of the heavens".¹²¹ The war against irresponsible power and misrule, against misgovernment and tyranny, was said to be bearing fruit. At public dinners the success of the common cause was celebrated all over the country; Calhoun was toasted in the same breath with Clay, while state rights doctrines were praised by those who had always shown themselves most consistent in their nationalism.¹²²

¹²⁰ *Niles' Register*, XLV, 388, 410; cf. *Richmond Whig*, in *U. S. Telegraph*, Jan. 11, 23, 24, 25, Feb. 13, 15, 1834.

¹²¹ McDuffie to Whig citizens of Warrenton, Virginia.

¹²² See account of dinner to Senator Poindexter of Mississippi at Lexington, Kentucky, in July, 1835, *Niles' Register*, XLVIII, 368. Also of "Grand Whig Festival" at Baltimore by the Whigs of Maryland and Pennsylvania, Nov. 12, 1835, *id.*, XLIX, 197-200.

CHAPTER II.

THE RISE OF THE WHIG PARTY IN THE SOUTH, 1836-1840.

If the situation before 1836 had revealed certain anomalies in the anti-administration ranks, the future had still more in store. It was now to exhibit this Whig opposition, increased by a new element, making its first presidential contest in the South under the banner of a man who had supported each and every step which Jackson had taken—every move that had tended to lessen the confidence of the nation in its chief magistrate. This, too, was done under the slogan of resistance to executive usurpation which now came to have a still more enlarged definition. Reference is made to the campaign of Judge Hugh L. White in the South against Van Buren, the official nominee for the presidency.

Even before Jackson had begun his second four years of service at the head of the national government, his intention to make Van Buren his successor had become noised about. At once objectors appeared on all sides, even among the loudest advocates of Jacksonian democracy. Martin Van Buren was almost the last man who could have been expected to stem the current in the South which had set in against the party in power. There were, to be sure, those who were called "collar men", ready to bow the knee and submit their necks to the collar without knowing why or wherefore, but it was felt that they were limited to the less

intelligent people and were steadily decreasing in number.¹ The state rights men always preferred to explain their breach with the administration as due to their "aversion and even abhorrence" toward Van Buren, who came to be denounced as "the Arch Magician, abolitionist and political intriguer" and whose corruption they considered as more and more verified every day.² Not only was there this widespread personal hostility to Van Buren but, on the other hand, Jackson's own course was regarded as a new and arbitrary proceeding—this matter of choosing one's successor in that high office. The number of those who took this view steadily increased but this did not bend the president from his purpose. On the contrary, it soon became a matter of general comment that he was making use of the vast official patronage of the executive department to further his intention. It was inevitable that the leaders within the party who had more or less definite presidential aspirations should be chagrined at this and inclined to join the number of the disaffected. While matters were in this condition, Senator White of Tennessee yielded to the request of the delegation from his state and announced his willingness to make the contest for the presidency.³

Thus far Jackson had apparently suffered but little in his home state from his course on the bank and on nullification. There the politicians held sway and they saw to it that the state remained on the loyal side. But when it is realized that Tennessee's presidential vote in 1836 was more than double that of the previous election, it

¹ B. B. Smith to Mangum, May 27, 1836; cf. S. Hillman to Mangum, Feb. 16, 1834, Mangum MSS.

² Mangum to John Bell, June 15, 1835, etc., *ibid.*

³ Scott, *Memoir of H. L. White*, 330; *Niles' Register*, XLVIII, 39.

becomes clear that there must have been a large "stay-at-home vote", evidently not in sympathy with Jacksonian democracy as it could not be brought to the polls even by the intense local excitement in the interest of "Old Hickory".⁴

As president, moreover, Jackson had distributed the rewards for fidelity among his active supporters with absolute disregard for impartiality. Polk and Grundy and others had received the confidence and favor of the administration, while John Bell and the friends of Judge White had to a large extent been overlooked. This favoritism caused a gradual estrangement of the latter group from the administration. As soon as Jackson perceived this lukewarmness, his partiality increased and reconciliation grew more and more impossible. The decision was reached on the part of the White supporters that their popular senator was, on general political principles as on all other grounds, preferable to Van Buren for the next presidency; so they prepared to push his candidacy even at the risk of a rupture with the executive. They tried to make it clear, however, that he was put forward as the representative of all those democratic principles which had brought Jackson into office and that no antagonism was necessarily intended to the president whose administration they had consistently supported.⁵

Judge White was a strict constructionist of the purest type. He had an exaggerated fear of federalism and consistently opposed on constitutional grounds a na-

⁴ Cf. Caldwell, "John Bell of Tennessee", in *Am. Hist. Rev.*, IV, 657.

⁵ Cf. Bell's Vauxhall speech, *Nashville Banner*, June 15, 1835, in *Niles' Register*, XLVIII, 330-336; also his address to the editor of the *Nashville Republican*, May 4, 1835, in *ibid.*, 229-232.

tional bank, a protective tariff, and internal improvements by the national government.⁶ He had been Jackson's confidential adviser in the early part of his first administration but had been superseded by the so-called "kitchen cabinet". Retiring gracefully, he remained a loyal supporter of the president but was always suspicious of his close relations with Van Buren, which caused a gradual estrangement.⁷

The movement to repudiate Jackson's choice for a successor spread, and concentrated in the South on White as the opposing candidate. It acquired a sound basis when, in 1835, both the Alabama and Tennessee legislatures passed resolutions formally nominating him for the presidency.⁸ Jackson did all he could to stem the tide. On February 23, 1835, he wrote a letter denying that he had interfered with the free choice by the people of a presidential candidate.⁹ White and his friends were denounced by the official organ¹⁰ and newspapers were established in Tennessee to combat the heresy. But the movement acquired such strength that it soon became the most formidable factor of the opposition to Van Buren in the South.

This new group of anti-administration men, who had hitherto been careful not to incur Jackson's displeasure, had much in common with those advocates of particularism who had broken away from him in the nullification period. Under the circumstances the state rights men, except in South Carolina where they could

⁶ Scott, *Memoir of H. L. White*, 73-76, 78-81; cf. his letter to Sherrod Williams, July 2, 1836, *Niles' Register*, LI, 44.

⁷ Scott, *op. cit.*, 246, 251.

⁸ *Niles' Register*, XLVII, 378; Scott, *op. cit.*, 331-332.

⁹ *Niles' Register*, XLVIII, 80-81.

¹⁰ *Washington Globe*, April 13, 15, etc., 1835; *Niles' Register*, XLIX, 294, 337, 376.

not forget White's vote on the Force Bill, naturally came at once to his support.¹¹

But the course of the nationalists was more uncertain. Except in Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware, Louisiana, and perhaps Virginia, they found themselves outnumbered by the other opposition factions. In the first three states they went for Harrison, the regular candidate of the northern Whigs. The Virginia nationalists solved their peculiar problems in convention by nominating Harrison and Tyler and then adopting the regular White electoral ticket.¹² But elsewhere in the South they followed the majority and supported White, it being evident that except by union and harmony they could not expect to defeat Van Buren. The great rally-cry had become "Anything to beat Van Buren". Clay himself favored White as a separate opposition candidate for the South, hoping that the election might thereby be thrown into the House and Van Buren's defeat secured.¹³ Even should White be elected, he and his friends considered it a lesser evil than the success of the "designated heir".¹⁴

Jackson and his press characterized the opposition at this time as "White-whiggery", a combination of "federalists, nullifiers, and new born whigs", a "Holy

¹¹ *Id.*, XLVIII, 264; Tyler, *Tylers*, I, 516-517; Gilmer, *First Settlers of Upper Georgia*, 501-502.

¹² *Niles' Register*, L, 330. Tyler was the favorite Whig candidate in the South for the vice-presidency. There was little interest, however, in this phase of the contest. See R. B. Gillian to Mangum, April 1, 1836, Mangum MSS.

¹³ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 394-395; Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 89.

¹⁴ Crittenden, writing to J. T. Morehead, Dec. 23, 1835, commended "the common object of checking the dictated succession and changing the Dynasty. . . . To some extent the friends of White and Harrison have, as I have before stated, a common object, namely, to defeat Van Burenism, and this common object is a point of union for them." Crittenden MSS.

Alliance between bankism and nullification under a *White banner*".¹⁵ The "new born" element extended the party to Tennessee and added to its strength elsewhere. During the summer the results of the state elections in Kentucky, North Carolina, Louisiana, Alabama, and Missouri gave promise of the defeat of the candidate of presidential dictation.¹⁶ On the other hand, the southern Whigs had to meet the charges of the Van Buren papers and stump speakers that their sole object was to carry the election into the House in order that General Harrison might be made president—in other words, that Judge White was a mere tool to effect this object.¹⁷ This was, perhaps, the result of a natural inclination on the part of the Whigs in the South to defend Harrison against the charges of the "Van Burenites" and to prepare themselves for action if the choice of a president went to the House.¹⁸

But the election of the chief magistrate was settled by the popular vote without further contest. Of the southern states, Georgia and Tennessee voted for White while Kentucky, Maryland, and Delaware cast their votes for Harrison. Elsewhere in the South Van Buren, with the enormous advantage that the control of the government patronage gave him,¹⁹ was able to hold his own, but with very slight majorities in Mississippi and Louisiana. South Carolina paid her respects to the opposition through her legislature by giving her

¹⁵ *Niles' Register*, XLVIII, 75; XLIX, 187, 210; LI, 169.

¹⁶ *Savannah Republican*, Aug. 29, 1836.

¹⁷ *North Carolina Star* in *Savannah Republican*, Oct. 13, 1836; *State Rights Sentinel*, in *id.*, Nov. 3, 1836. Cf. B. Reeves to Crittenden, Jan. 13, 1836, Crittenden MSS.

¹⁸ *Savannah Republican*, Oct. 19, 20, Nov. 28, 1836.

¹⁹ See H. Potter to Mangum, Dec. 31, 1834, Mangum MSS.; G. M. Bibb to A. T. Burnley, April 5, 1835, Crittenden MSS.; Tyler to son, Feb. 15, 1836, Tyler MSS.

eleven electoral votes to Willie P. Mangum of North Carolina.

The election of 1836 thoroughly convinced Calhoun that he could not mould the Whig party to his will. The northern wing had shown itself settled in its nationalist convictions; in the South, part had followed this lead while the rest cooperated under a proclamation man whom South Carolina refused to support. Clay, moreover, found Calhoun an obstacle to concerted action and union among the opposition in Congress²⁰ and the latter in turn realized that his own sacrifices for the sake of coalition had brought none of the results for which he had hoped. The situation seemed to require a new alignment for Calhoun and developments shortly furnished the opportunity.

The Democratic party under a new president offered new attractions to state rights men, who saw less plausibility in the cry of executive usurpation as applied to Van Buren. His inaugural address, with the conservative doctrines it announced, seemed framed with the very object of conciliating these southerners.²¹ The Democrats, indeed, began a systematic campaign to show the state rights men that the difference between their respective principles was one of degree rather than of kind, that nullification was now only a memory, a mere abstraction of theory, and that parties would of necessity settle down on original bed-rock principles. The *Democratic Review* admitted that the stream of executive action had for a time been dangerously swollen but believed that it had now subsided to low water mark and was no longer a menace. It admitted that the Democratic

²⁰ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 412.

²¹ *National Intelligencer*, March 6, 1837.

party had temporarily forgotten its own vital and conservative principles of pure democracy, and had tended toward consolidation of power about the federal administration, but it promised that the Democrats would abstain from a course that had already proved disastrous.²² Henceforth, the essential opposition of principles would stand out as the line of division between the two great parties and a reorganization of parties on their true national grounds with many former Whigs ranged under the Democratic banner was expected. As a further inducement to former nullifiers, the Democrats explained that, though advocating the supremacy of the majority, they had a strong sympathy with minorities and agreed that minority rights should have a high moral claim on the respect and justice of majorities.²³

The struggle over the administration's sub-treasury measure furnished the occasion for such reorganization. Calhoun saw that continued alliance with the Whigs would mean the absorption of his followers and his own political annihilation, that coalition with the party in power was better calculated to further the principles which he and his following regarded as essential. Therefore, asserting his independent political position, he embraced the opportunity which his endorsement of Van Buren's financial remedy gave him and shifted his relations accordingly. Now that the danger of executive usurpation was over he saw in the proposal for a national bank as a remedy for the financial disarrangements of the day renewed danger of legislative encroachment. This he considered espe-

²² *Democratic Review*, III, 9, 287.

²³ *Id.*, I, 1-2, 3.

cially to be feared, so he broke off his alliance with the Whig party.²⁴ As at an earlier date, after having done his utmost to overthrow the protective system and to put an end to legislative usurpation, he had not hesitated to join the authors of that system in order to arrest the encroachments of the executive, so now he saw absolutely no reason for not rejoining his old allies of 1827, most of whom had continued to profess, if not to practise, the republican principles for which he was laboring. He found his new associates more congenial also in that their northern wing was, as a body, immeasurably more congenial than their opponents on the growing question of slavery, for after all his shift was a renewed appeal to the sectional interests of the South.

In Calhoun's own state this step was made easy by a reconciliation between the two local parties at the time when he was reelected to the United States Senate.²⁵ The question of the right of state interposition had long been shelved as a political issue and he was soon uniting with Poinsett and other Union leaders to punish recalcitrant Democrats²⁶ as well as those who refused to follow him into the Democratic party. He took the stump, but in vain, against Waddy Thompson, a fellow-nullifier of 1832, who had broken with him over the sub-treasury, and began the arbitrary control over South Carolina politics that he continued to exercise until his death, crushing out all independence of

²⁴ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 409; *Niles' Register*, LIII, 87; *Register of Debates*, XIV, pt. I, 176. He was rigorously denounced by the Whigs as an apostate. Cf. C. Wickliffe to Crittenden, Jan. 13, 1838, Crittenden MSS.

²⁵ *Niles' Register*, XLVII, 261; *Charleston Mercury*, Dec. 14, 1836.

²⁶ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 407.

thought or action in those under him.²⁷ If he did not entirely harmonize the two elements of the Democratic party there, he did keep them more or less strictly subordinate to his own policies.²⁸ Whiggery no longer had an important place in South Carolina politics and that state will henceforth require little consideration in this discussion.²⁹

In making this new alignment, Calhoun naturally carried with him a considerable following not only in South Carolina but throughout the South as well. The sub-treasury scheme was aptly called by some who opposed his action, "the 'Carolina Gap', through which we are to pass to Van Buren".³⁰ In Virginia, R. M. T. Hunter, W. F. Gordon, Littleton W. Tazewell, and other leaders who inclined to the South Carolina exposition transferred their allegiance to the administration party.³¹ John A. Quitman of Mississippi, realizing his radical disagreement with the nationals in the Whig party on every essential political tenet, and loudly advocating the independent treasury scheme, joined forces with the "genuine Republicans".³²

In Alabama the general body of state rights men followed the same course under such leaders as Dixon H.

²⁷ B. F. Perry, *Reminiscences*, 48-49, 57, 298.

²⁸ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 451-454, 816-828.

²⁹ Such prominent state rights leaders, however, as Senator Preston and Waddy Thompson refused to follow Calhoun in this shift. Among the other prominent South Carolinians who were henceforth consistent in their whiggery were Hugh S. Legaré and James L. Petigru of Charleston.

³⁰ It was called "the Trojan horse, in whose bowels Van Burenism is to be introduced into our citadel". *Niles' Register*, LV, 79. There were in Congress at this time eleven sub-treasury Whigs from the South. *Whig Almanac*, 1839, pp. 5, 6.

³¹ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 436; Tyler, *Tylers*, I, 584-586.

³² Claiborne, *Life and Correspondence of Quitman*, I, 168, 214; *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, I, 353.

Lewis in Congress and J. M. Calhoun in the state.³³ There as elsewhere they had never been an integral part of the Whig party; hence they were won over to the Democrats by their bids for support. This coalition resulted in a permanent loss to the Whigs of this wing because of the careful distribution of rewards by the Democratic leaders, many county Democratic tickets being formed of state rights men, while J. M. Calhoun was elected president of the Alabama senate as a recognition of the alliance.³⁴ In Alabama as in South Carolina the shift was one that extended down to the ordinary voter and a permanent Democratic control there was practically assured.

By such desertion, too, the North Carolina Whigs lost two of their representatives in Congress, Sawyer and Shepard. In Georgia, state rights men like Haralson refused to have close relations with the faction which favored a national bank, a protective tariff, and internal improvements. He found it easy to be elected to the state senate as a sub-treasury man and developed into a strong Democrat and a leader in that party.³⁵ Somewhat later three state rights Whig congressmen from Georgia, Colquitt, Black, and Cooper, who had been elected by their party on the general ticket system, declared for Van Buren upon similar grounds.³⁶

The Democrats welcomed this new accession with open arms. Its leaders were given prominent positions in the party and in the offices which it controlled, even

³³ Garrett, *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama*, 63.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 63, 64, 158.

³⁵ Wheeler, *History of Congress*, I, 252-253.

³⁶ *Niles' Register*, LIX, 101. Cf. H. L. Benning to Cobb, May 18, 1840, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence* (Am. Hist. Assoc., *Annual Report*, 1911, 11).

to the exclusion of the regulars. With few exceptions those state rights members of Congress who had deserted the Whigs because the latter opposed the sub-treasury were given the support of the Democrats in their contests for reelection. Those who were returned to their seats soon proved strong champions of Democracy. Under the circumstances this was a prominent factor in giving a new tone and character to the principles of that party; greater respect was evident for the arguments which lay at the basis of the nullification doctrine.³⁷ The party which had hitherto lacked great leaders in the southern states very readily accepted the growing prominence of men like Mason, Quitman, and Calhoun.

But this shifting of allegiance did not mean a transfer of the whole state rights element to the administration party. Except in South Carolina and Alabama it probably included but a small minority of the state rights men—of leaders as well as of rank and file. Many believed firmly that Calhoun's motives were exclusively selfish and ambitious and dictated by jealousy of Clay's good fortunes. These state rights Whigs refused to follow Calhoun, to "raise unceasing hosannas to Bentonian humbuggery", or to surround themselves by "supporters of the bloody bill, by the expungers, by all that faithless and atrocious crew".³⁸

³⁷ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 435.

³⁸ Tyler, *Tylers*, I, 586; II, 295, 700. Wm. C. Preston wrote to Tyler, Dec. 30, 1837: "Mr. Calhoun has supposed that he could carry North Carolina and Georgia as well as our own State. In this he has been vastly mistaken. The State-rights party of North Carolina stands firm, and in Georgia we have not lost a man from our friend Gilmer down, and he writes cheerfully that the Whigs will carry that State at the next election." *Id.*, I, 586-587. Cf. Crittenden to Mangum, Oct. 11, 1837, Mangum MSS.

It is clear, however, that the Whigs lost many of the extreme particularists.

Although the sub-treasury scheme worked havoc with party lines in the South, it clearly failed to secure the unanimous approval of that section. The national bank still had its southern supporters who, however, recognizing themselves to be in a minority, were content with quietly expressing their preference. Many others favored the use of state banks by the treasury department as the least dangerous solution of the bank question, asserting that the states clearly had the power to incorporate them. To both of these groups a treasury bank was especially to be feared as an alarming extension of executive power in the hands of a man like Van Buren. Judge White of Tennessee even offered a scheme by which all constitutional limitations could be avoided and the scruples of both elements of the opposition respected. He proposed to have Congress charter a national bank to do business in the District of Columbia, authorizing it at the same time to connect itself with selected banks in each state with the consent of the respective states; these were to perform many of the functions of the former branch banks; the whole arrangement was intended to give all the advantageous results that the old Bank of the United States had given.⁸⁹

The administration party also suffered from defection. Many who had been drawn close to Jackson by his pet bank policy were taken aback by Van Buren's suggestion of divorcing the government from the banks. There was a considerable body of "conservatives" in

⁸⁹ *Niles' Register*, LIII, 10.

Congress, including William C. Rives in the Senate and several in the House from Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia, who said that the sub-treasury was at war with the jealous republican principles of 1798 and 1799 and who favored a regulated system of deposits in state banks.⁴⁰ Rives and his Virginia supporters were given to understand that there was no room for them in the Democratic party as long as they were not disposed to lend a liberal support to the administration. In reply they announced uncompromising hostility to Van Buren and his satellites.⁴¹ Once thrown into the opposition they naturally joined the Whigs after the nominations for the presidential election of 1840 were announced.⁴² Rives received his reward from the Virginia Whigs even before he had satisfied all of his orthodoxy, and elsewhere the southern conservative leaders were given high recognition.

The elections of 1838 were a fair key to the results of this reshaping of parties. The issue in the South was largely the independent treasury. The returns showed clearly that the Whigs were not entirely the losers. Early in the year reports from Virginia showed a sweeping Whig victory which ensured complete control of the legislature; in August the occurrence was repeated in North Carolina where increased majorities were piled up. Georgia and Louisiana returned solid Whig delegations to Congress as a result of the elections there—in the former by the general ticket method. In Mississippi, also, the Whigs won a sweeping victory under the leadership of S. S. Prentiss, who in 1837 had

⁴⁰ *Niles' Register*, LVI, 398.

⁴¹ *Id.*, LV, 375; LVI, 270.

⁴² *Id.*, LVIII, 5-10.

contested the state election over the issue of the national bank. In South Carolina and Alabama alone had the Democrats shown themselves able to hold their own and in both of these states their strength was largely the result of the new alignment of the state rights men.

But the problem of a financial remedy had not reached a solution before the presidential election came up for the consideration of the nation. Preparations were begun early; indeed, it was already understood that Van Buren would stand for reelection and the Whigs alone had the problem of sorting out a candidate. Impressed by their defeat in 1836 with the imperative necessity for union of the factions under one chief, the southern Whigs turned more and more to Clay. Though his availability was very much open to doubt in 1836, since that time he stood out still more prominently as the recognized leader of the opposition.⁴³ He had more or less deliberately assumed an attitude which was calculated to increase his popularity in the South where he had always been weakest.

Except in Maryland, Kentucky, and Louisiana, southern Whigs were still predominatingly strict constructionists—anti-bank, anti-tariff, and anti-internal improvement men. But Clay had changed his policy since 1832 when he had declared that “to preserve, maintain and strengthen the American System, he would defy the South, the President, and the devil”. His connection with the compromise tariff and his later

⁴³ *Dem. Rev.*, III, 297-298. “The Whigs of Virginia prefer him to any other man living; the old Jackson party almost to a man, (in this region) hold this language to us, ‘Give us Mr. Clay and we shall be satisfied’”. C. Dorman to Crittenden, Dec. 10, 1837, Crittenden MSS. Cf. H. C. Jones to Mangum, Dec. 22, 1837; Clay to Mangum, Dec. 10, 1837, Mangum MSS.

political course strengthened his position in the South. Southern Whigs who differed from Clay in the matter of political principle expressed high admiration for him as an accomplished statesman and even urged his claims to the presidency.⁴⁴

The South was given to understand, moreover, that the American system was an abandoned issue; that Clay was willing to see the compromise tariff remain as a permanent adjustment, the measure of the amount of protection he was willing to concede to the manufacturing interests; that while he favored internal improvements for general and national objects, now that the states had actively taken up the work the federal government ought not to exert itself in that direction; and that, as regards a national bank, he should not urge the establishment of another without a call from the people for action, for although he favored such an institution with guarded and restricted powers, if the people wanted state banks he was entirely satisfied.⁴⁵

Given to choose between the man who had made such declarations and the present executive, even particularists like John Tyler, William C. Preston, and Hugh L.

⁴⁴ Poindexter to F. Huston, March 9, 1834. Miss. Hist. Soc., *Publications*, IV, 333; Wm. C. Preston to Tyler, Dec. 30, 1837, Tyler, *Tylers*, I, 587.

"His is the only name that affords any hope of relief from the present dynasty. . . . Mr. Clay entertains many opinions which I believe to be fundamentally erroneous—and if he were president the hopes of the country would be in his sound sense—his high character, his bold and free spirit—and that broad and zealous patriotism which eminently belongs to him.—In these essential particulars there is no man of the administration party at all his equal,—and as to his wrong opinions they share them all in common with him,—and heresies that are notoriously destitute of all principle whatsoever." Wm. C. Preston to H. M. Bowyer, Jan. 11, 1839; cf. Dec. 25, 1838 (?), Preston MSS.

⁴⁵ See Wise, *Seven Decades*, 162-169; Tyler, *Tylers*, I, 601-602; *William and Mary Qltly.*, XVIII, 223-224.

White saw no reason to hesitate.⁴⁶ White declared Clay preferable to Van Buren on several counts, especially in regard to financial policy, attitude toward executive power and patronage, and general motives.⁴⁷ Clay was remembered as "the great pacificator" who was on all occasions ready to sacrifice personal and party advantages for the general peace and welfare of the country. He was, moreover, a southerner representing a slave state and was generally believed to occupy a satisfactory position on slavery. So it came to be regarded as a certainty by southern Whigs that Clay would be the candidate of the opposition and they were generally reconciled to it—some were even enthusiastic over it. After all, they said, the great and paramount question of the day is the question of executive power; in that regard this is the worst administration that ever cursed a free country and merits unabated hostility; our only hopes are in a change of dynasty: "let us expel the Stuarts whoever may replace them".⁴⁸ Henry A. Wise of Virginia declared more emphatically: "I would choose any decent *white* man in the nation to be president in preference to Martin Van Buren."⁴⁹ Legaré of South Carolina, who only shortly before had been driven from the administration party, became a willing worker in the ranks of the opposition.

⁴⁶ *Niles' Register*, LVI, 275-276.

⁴⁷ Scott, *Memoir of H. L. White*, 356-366; *Niles' Register*, LV, 8-9; White to Crittenden, Sept. 1, 1838, Crittenden MSS.

⁴⁸ Senator Preston to Whigs of Halifax Co., Va., on July 14, 1838, *Niles' Register*, LIV, 392-393.

⁴⁹ *Niles' Register*, LVIII, 103. B. W. Leigh was anxious to rid the country of "the plunderers, the knaves, the blackguards, and fools" with whom the administration was infested. J. Campbell to Crittenden, July 12, 1839, Crittenden MSS. He preferred the election of Clay. B. W. Leigh to Crittenden, June 5, 1838, *ibid*.

This willingness to fight under Clay's banner with the object of displacing the president was openly avowed by the Whigs in several of the southern states. By 1838, his name was posted as the Whig candidate by several southern Whig newspapers.⁵⁰ Early in 1839 the Mississippi Whig convention selected delegates instructed to vote for Clay and Tyler to represent the state in the national convention at Harrisburg, and the Whigs in the Louisiana legislature named Clay as their first choice.⁵¹ By the fall of the year, state conventions in Alabama, Virginia, and North Carolina had also expressed their preferences for him. South Carolina was by this time of course an impossibility; the situation in Georgia requires special treatment.

As local conditions in that state made strict construction doctrines generally popular, politics there had in great part existed on a personal basis, the parties grouping themselves about certain leaders largely on social and economic grounds and without any real connection with national parties. This situation continued until about 1833 or 1834 when a readjustment took place and a loose connection with the national anti-Jackson party was established by the "State Rights" party on the basis of opposition to the president's proclamation and the force bill.⁵² The "State Rights" party still continued, however, under the same name and in a great degree unaffected by the coalition.⁵³ Its members successfully supported White in the state in 1836, and later

⁵⁰ C. M. Noland to Crittenden, Feb. 4, 1838, Crittenden MSS.; *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, I, 353.

⁵¹ *National Intelligencer*, March 30, 1839; *Niles' Register*, LV, 385.

⁵² *Niles' Register*, LIII, 146; Gilmer, *First Settlers of Upper Georgia*, 561. Cf. Phillips, *Georgia and State Rights*, 137-138.

⁵³ Avary, *Recollections of A. H. Stephens*, 16.

won important victories in the local elections, but they retained their independent position and in 1839 announced the name of their leader, George M. Troup, as candidate for the presidency.⁵⁴ Their opponents alleged that this nomination was a ruse to neutralize the state and to keep it from Van Buren as it was known that Clay could not carry it; in reply the Troup men declared that the move was a sincere one growing out of the necessities of the situation, that their principles required them to stand aloof from both parties, Clay being a known enemy and Van Buren a traitor to their cause.⁵⁵

Events were, however, to upset the calculations of the southern Whigs by bringing the nomination of a candidate to head their ticket about whom they had done but little thinking. The Harrisburg convention in December, 1839, eliminated their favorite candidate. It offered them in Harrison a popular military hero upon whom it was hoped that the opposition could concentrate without undue concessions of principle, and in Tyler as nominee for the vice-presidency an added inducement to the friends of state rights and strict construction.⁵⁶ As they realized the difficulty of harmonizing on general principles, to say nothing of agreeing on a series of measures to which the party would be committed, the party managers wisely refrained from issuing a party platform. Southern Whig leaders, and Tyler as much as any of them, were sorely disappointed with the nomination for the presidency, but most of them decided to accept the situation with as

⁵⁴ Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, June 25, 1839; *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 306.

⁵⁵ Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 137.

⁵⁶ Cf. Wise, *Seven Decades*, 175.

much grace as possible and to essay the task of stirring up enthusiasm for Harrison.⁵⁷

The Whig party in the South, as will be shown later, drew largely upon those elements in the community which, by virtue of wealth and social position, were separated from the "common people". In other words, for one reason or another, it attracted to itself the aristocratic members of the planting and slave-owning class. Of this the leaders were generally aware. They could not but have realized the necessity of attracting other elements to their political organization if they were to plan on building up a party majority in the South. For they were otherwise doomed to a hopeless minority.⁵⁸ Accordingly, even before the national convention at Harrisburg, certain Clay men had had the foresight to see that while the southern Whigs preferred Clay, they could not secure for him the vote of the South. "The Whigs could only triumph", wrote a Clay man, "by concentrating upon Harrison and keeping him alone before the people. The great mass have points of contact and sympathy with men of Harrison's calibre and of his character and reputation which do not attract them to the orator and statesman."⁵⁹ Such considerations of policy made it easier to dispel the disappointment at the nomination of "Old Tip". Preparations were soon under way for an active canvass. It was a critical contest; as Preston declared, "The hurrah! is with us. Our final destiny is at stake for if Harrison

⁵⁷ *National Intelligencer*, Dec. 14, 1839; A. Bullitt to Crittenden, Dec. 21, 1839, Crittenden MSS. Calhoun at first predicted that Harrison's nomination would throw off the whole southern division of the party. *Calhoun Correspondence*, 435, 437.

⁵⁸ P. H. Mangum to W. P. Mangum, Jan. 17, 1836, Mangum MSS.

⁵⁹ J. J. Marshall to Crittenden, April 23, 1839; cf. Crittenden to Orlando Brown, Jan. 7, 1838, Crittenden MSS.

cannot be elected the Whigs will never attempt another rally.”⁶⁰ Clay generously contributed his share toward the election of Harrison, his successful rival for the Whig nomination.

The “hurrah” campaign was soon in full swing and the excitement was kept alive by the usual expedients. As there were few large cities in the South and those separated by considerable distances,⁶¹ it was very difficult for southern Whig politicians to assemble such monster mass meetings as came together in the North and West. But the leaders worked with marvelous energy and brought together enormous and enthusiastic crowds at St. Louis, Raleigh, Tuscaloosa, and several other places. The feature of the canvass, however, was the great southwestern convention at Nashville where a hundred thousand people gathered from several states and were provided with the best of entertainment including the oratorical efforts of Clay and Crittenden.⁶²

The character of the campaign was such as to attract a large new element to the Whig party. In the South, as in the North, that sturdy democratic element which had felt the sting of the unfortunate reference to the “log-cabin, hard-cider candidate” rallied around the standard of the leader whose personality embodied so many of their own ideals. With them cooperated many from the working classes who had previously been held to the support of Van Buren largely by the appeal to their social and economic position in the outcry of the Democratic leaders—“the people against the banks,

⁶⁰ Wm. C. Preston to Wilde, March 29, 1840, Preston MSS.

⁶¹ See census of cities in 1840, *Niles' Register*, LXI, 113; *Twelfth Census* (1900), *Population*, I, 430, 431.

⁶² *Niles' Register*, LIX, 8-10; Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 119-127.

against the rich".⁶³ It is easy to understand, on the other hand, that many southern Whigs with their aristocratic inclinations privately regarded all this "hullabaloo" as disgusting and criticized the use of such measures to gain popular support.⁶⁴ Those who took this view, however, either outgrew this objection in the growing enthusiasm of the campaign or they kept their opinions to themselves.

Georgia was the last southern state to swing into line. Even after a convention of the State Rights Whig party had refused to support either Harrison or Van Buren, and in spite of the inclination of ex-Governor Troup, their nominee, to favor Van Buren over his opponent, Troup's name was withdrawn and a Harrison convention at Milledgeville on the first of June appointed an electoral ticket headed by George R. Gilmer, a champion of state rights and a recent governor.⁶⁵ The state rights men were soon actively engaged in the canvass—the great struggle for political deliverance. The following is an account of a Whig meeting at Macon, which is typical of the method of electioneering generally resorted to in this canvass:

Last night the Tips had a great celebration here and of a kind peculiar to themselves. Their club room was illuminated at an early hour and soon after the house was filled to over-

⁶³ *Niles' Register*, LV, 311; LVI, 250. See also H. Potter to Mangum, Dec. 31, 1834, Mangum MSS.

⁶⁴ *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, II, 182; Shields, *Life of Prentiss*, 300; Miss. Hist. Soc., *Publications*, IX, 180.

⁶⁵ This action was taken under the direction of J. M. Berrien. Gilmer, *First Settlers of Upper Georgia*, 571; *Niles' Register*, LVII, 322, LVIII, 181, 230. By the middle of May, there was "no room left for reasonable doubt that that party [State Rights] will go for the Harrisburg nomination, and jump at once from Nullification to a Tariff, a Bank, and Federalism at large". H. L. Benning to Cobb, May 18, 1840, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

flowing with men, women and children. By the bye, this way of making politicians of their women is something new under the sun. But so it is they go to the strife. A select set of singers then sing a Tip song. Their orator then edifies his audience for two hours on the rascality of Van Buren and all his friends. . . . Another song, then another speech and another song. And so they carry on.⁶⁶

As the southern Whig leaders had tacitly agreed at Harrisburg to leave out of consideration their individual preferences as to measures, so these matters were laid aside during the campaign and the emphasis was placed upon the personality and private worth of their standard-bearer. All over the South it was shown that Harrison was a genuine Jeffersonian Democrat, that he and his supporters stood for the faith of the fathers of 1798 and 1799, while Van Buren and the corruptionists represented a new-fangled and perverted type. This was the burden of Clay's and Crittenden's speeches at the Nashville meeting and of Henry A. Wise's numerous addresses during the campaign. It was the keynote of the resolutions and addresses which issued from Whig conventions and meetings in Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and all the other southern states.⁶⁷ "Martin Van Buren a pure Democrat!" exclaimed Crittenden, "Great God, what a pedigree for Democrats to refer to hereafter."⁶⁸ Harrison himself declared that the

⁶⁶ A. P. Powers to Cobb, Oct. [], 1840, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

⁶⁷ *Niles' Register*, LIX, 118-119; Tyler, *Tylers*, I, 608, 609; cf. Avary, *Recollections of A. H. Stephens*, 16. R. H. Parker wrote to Van Buren, April 6, 1840, warning him of the tactics of the Virginia Whigs: "One art of deception is to assume the Republican garb and arrogate exclusive democracy—They are Republican *Democratic* Whigs; . . . the advocates of the poor labourers, and the opposers of executive and legislative power, nor will they doff this garment, or defend any of their favorite measures until the election is over." Van Buren MSS.

⁶⁸ Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 125.

Augean stables of Van Burenism could be cleansed only with a Jeffersonian broom and gave his promise to prominent southern Whigs to carry out those democratic republican principles in which he had from early youth been trained.⁶⁹ On this basis he was accepted with but very little desertion from the party.⁷⁰

The August state elections in Kentucky and North Carolina piled up unprecedented Whig majorities which indicated the direction of the wind; in October, Delaware, Maryland, and Georgia reversed their majorities and became Whig. When November brought the returns from the presidential election, Tennessee, Louisiana, and Mississippi were added to the above list, while the Democratic majorities elsewhere were cut down to mere trifles. In Virginia, the Shenandoah valley and the western part of the state overcame the Whig majority of the older section by but little over one thousand votes.

The result was hailed as the rebuke of federalism, the restoration of democratic republicanism to its legitimate ascendancy. "In truth it cannot be denied", declared the *Madisonian*, "that general Harrison is one of the fairest expressions of American democracy that we have ever had."⁷¹ More than that the election did not prove; for the canvass was strangely devoid of discussion of concrete issues and of promises for constructive legislation. Now that the enemy had been worsted and that immediate danger from that source had been removed, differences of opinion among Whigs, though overlooked during the presidential contest,

⁶⁹ Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 114-115.

⁷⁰ J. Jackson to Cobb, June 7, 1840, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

⁷¹ *Niles' Register*, LIX, 205.

might properly be expected to crop out again. To some the victory seemed a guarantee of stability and future harmony for the party.⁷² In reality, it but imposed upon the Whigs the necessity of marshalling and organizing their forces for united and harmonious action. This, however, was not accomplished without the application of considerable energy, patience, and perseverance by the leaders who took up this important work. It became the task of the years following the election of Harrison and Tyler.

⁷² Raleigh *Register*, Nov. 27, 1840.

CHAPTER III.

THE GROWTH OF UNITY, 1841-1844.

By laying aside the doubtful issues of bank and tariff the Whigs had been able to unite with remarkable enthusiasm upon the questions which they considered material to the great object of national reform.¹ Having elected their candidate, it soon became their duty to redeem the pledges they had made. The important question was as to what was to be included in the Whig program. Should it stop short with the promises of a campaign in which vital issues had been kept in the background as much as possible? Clay stepped forward to give the answer, determined to take the helm and to direct his party in reaping the fruits of a victory that might well have been his own.

According to Wise, Clay, who believed that the constitutional objection to a national bank was confined to the Virginia Whigs, openly rejoiced that, since they had failed to return a majority for Harrison, they could not embarrass the party with their peculiar doctrines.² It was soon evident that Clay had selected the bank question for the first place on his legislative program as an issue upon which he might hold the Whigs to their party obligations. Clay reminded Congress that the people had returned an overwhelming verdict against the sub-treasury and that some substitute system had to be provided. He did not, however, announce

¹ *Log Cabin*, Nov. 9, 1840.

² *William and Mary Qtly.*, XVIII, 225; Tyler, *Tylers*, I, 600; II, 30.

a positive program while Van Buren remained in office but prepared the way by creating sentiment in favor of a special session which he probably induced Harrison to summon.³ Such a program was, however, taking definite shape in his mind and he counted his chances of being able to unite his party to carry it out.

When, as the result of Harrison's unexpected death only a month after his inauguration, John Tyler stepped up to occupy the presidential chair, Clay and many of the Whigs became fearful of the results it would have upon party measures.⁴ Clay felt, however, that even should Tyler, as a state rights man and a "Virginia abstractionist", offer opposition to any of them it would be but to detach himself from the great body of the Whig party.⁵ Strongly convinced of his leadership, the Kentucky statesman laid before the Senate early in the special session of 1841 a resolution announcing the measures that he thought should be acted upon. He proposed, of course, to do away with the sub-treasury; it was to be superseded by a national bank to be incorporated at once. He also pointed out the need for the provision of an adequate revenue, which meant a new tariff arrangement.

Southern Whigs saw Clay announce a settled policy upon measures over which they had previously been divided among themselves. With the events of the past few years prominently in their minds, they were now called upon to decide whether or not to follow his lead. Circumstances had to a considerable extent operated

³ Clay to R. P. Letcher, Dec. 13, 1840, Crittenden MSS.

⁴ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 454; J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, X, 465; Tyler, *Tylers*, II, 30; Wm. A. Graham to Mangum, June 12, 1841, Mangum MSS.

⁵ Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 156-157.

to place them in a receptive mood, willing to listen to the voice of their great leader, even though it was at once pointed out that his plans declared open war on all republican strict construction.⁶

The problems to be dealt with were, after all, practical ones, to which political theories have always had to make concessions. All Whigs agreed that a successor to the sub-treasury system had to be provided for solving the currency problem; most of them admitted that past experience pointed to a national bank as productive of better results than a pet bank system. It was to be hoped that republican Whigs of the strict construction brand would listen to the same arguments that had induced President Madison to lay aside his scruples and sign the second charter. Similarly, the necessity of providing a proper revenue for a government with empty coffers, with a deficit of several millions, and on the verge of bankruptcy made nearly all feel the necessity of remodeling the system of duties to secure a revenue at least adequate to meet the expenses of administration.⁷

These proved to be effective arguments when legislation on these subjects was undertaken in this and the succeeding session of Congress. Whig leaders in the South soon realized that nearly every interest with which they were connected demanded a continuance of their existing political alignment. There were many reasons why they, even when of state rights antecedents and inclinations, should not drop their connection with the "federalist" Whigs of the North, which former associates like Calhoun had found unendurable. In ana-

⁶ Tyler, *Tylers*, II, 38.

⁷ Benton, *Thirty Years View*, II, 413; *Mobile Journal*, in *Niles' Register*, LX, 183; *Savannah Republican*, Oct. 13, 1841.

lyzing the motives which governed their political action, it becomes evident that in the determination of national party affiliations they were greatly influenced by local economic and social as well as political divisions.

One element in the Whig party in the South, and in many states without doubt the most conspicuous and important, cannot be accounted for by any natural attraction of the latitudinarian ideas of their northern fellow-partisans. In the cotton belt of the Gulf states, in the districts of extensive plantations and large slave holdings, there was always a very considerable Whig vote cast. Self interest inclined the slave-holding cotton producer toward state rights theories, for he was early convinced of the importance of free trade and of the necessity for hostility to federal paternalism in general. His lot was thrown with the nullification sympathizers of the early thirties; he joined the anti-Jackson alliance with added zeal for state rights doctrines when he found whatever confidence he had left in the president shattered by the principles avowed in the anti-nullification proclamation. The state rights belief of the cotton producer led him in an opposite direction from his brother of the up-country, whose theories grew largely out of the difficulties with the Creek and Cherokee Indians, who was satisfied with what Jackson had done in that regard, and in consequence readily forgave him for the determined views which South Carolina nullification had forced upon him. The former was driven to complete alienation as he witnessed the disastrous effect of the removal of the deposits upon the planting and commercial interests of the South. He naturally found a prominent place in the great Whig coalition.

During the early thirties this situation was true of the South Atlantic states as well as of those of the lower South, but only in Virginia and Georgia did the main body of the planting interest continue permanently in the Whig party. The vanguard of the South Carolina contingent was led away by Calhoun, influenced in part, doubtless, by his personal ambitions; Senator Preston and Waddy Thompson, however, refused to join in committing the planters of the Palmetto state to the administration party. As to North Carolina, many of the larger cotton producers there were, in their state rights beliefs, the followers of the political teachings of the venerable Nathaniel Macon, who used all his influence to keep them reconciled to President Jackson and to keep down the number of the desertions. Macon found it possible, in 1833, to formulate an interpretation of federal relations that enabled him to harmonize his state rights doctrines with the attitude of Jackson in his proclamation; his influence over the large slaveholders brought it general acceptance.⁸ He followed Jackson to a complete endorsement of Van Buren for whom he secured the electoral vote of the state in 1836. Moreover, the rise of powerful young Whig leaders of nationalistic tendencies in the western part of the state served to identify that section with the Whig party and to evoke the sectional line which divided the state on political matters, only to throw the planting interest largely on the opposite side. Yet the tradition of plantation aristocracy is often found associated with the Whig party of North Carolina, as it is associated with the Whigs of Virginia, Georgia, and the Gulf states.

⁸ Macon to S. P. Carson, Feb. 9, 1833, *Niles' Register*, XLIV, 418. Cf. R. H. Jones to Mangum, Aug. 22, 1834, Mangum MSS.

The economic and political interests of the southern Whigs were the "special interests" of the slavocracy. During the early forties the Whig party was frequently denounced as the aristocratic party of the slave-holders, the democracy of Mississippi designating the local organization as "the empire of Mississippi coondom". Later, indeed, when the slavery question became the paramount issue in politics, the Whigs had no hesitancy in asserting that their party included the largest slave-owners and that a large majority of the slaves in the South was the property of the Whigs. The *Richmond Whig*, February 4, 1850, insisted that the members of its party owned two-thirds of the slaves of Virginia, while the *Montgomery Alabama Journal* of September 2, 1850, was sure that, of all the slaves in the South, between three-fourths and seven-eighths were owned by Whigs.

Social distinctions served to confirm the lines which economic interests had already drawn. The Whig planting aristocracy was a natural and an exclusive one. Its members formed a broadcloth and silk stocking party embracing a large part of the wealth, intelligence, and blue blood of the South.* There was an old saw in Virginia that "Whigs know each other by the instinct of gentlemen".¹⁰ The line of social cleavage that separated the Whig planters from the toiling but prosperous hill farmers and from the indolent "poor

* *Dem. Rev.*, II, 315; Claiborne, *Mississippi*, I, 409; *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, II, 339; Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 223.

¹⁰ Claiborne, *Seventy-five Years in Old Virginia*, 131. It is said of John Syme, the editor of the *Petersburg Intelligencer*, that "when asked whether or not a Democrat was a gentleman he was wont to tap his snuff box significantly, and reply: 'Well, he is apt not to be; but if he is, he is in damned bad company'". Wise, *Life of Wise*, 178. So also "most of the gentlefolk of Natchez" were Whigs. Mrs. Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, I, 189.

whites " was a severely distinct one, enough to engender political antagonism. In their stately mansions, surrounded with almost every comfort of the day and with many luxuries, and educated in the polished manners of their class, the planters regarded as social necessities what to the others were symbols of effeminacy and dandyism, or at least of foolish extravagance. They were usually men of culture and of broad interests: often they had received a college education in the North; they customarily travelled to the northern resorts in summer and came in contact with persons of various ideas and ideals; with these they were more sociable than with the non-slave-holding classes at home. It only intensified the aristocratic notion which had developed that their less fortunate neighbors were not fit to associate with them socially or politically.¹¹

The origin of this social line which so nearly coincided with the party line can be traced, in the southern Atlantic states at least, well back into the eighteenth century. But it was in connection with the developments which culminated in the triumph of Jacksonian Democracy that the real tightening of these lines was begun. When in the early twenties the up-country

¹¹ Even in North Carolina the Democrats were aware of this opinion "of these sages and sachems of aristocracy". The editor of the *Wilmington Journal*, a Democratic paper, complained as late as May 1, 1854 that the Whigs "appear to think this world of ours composed of two very different and distinct classes—themselves and their candidates—who, dwelling in the odor of 'respectability', are above and beyond criticism, and must be handled with silk gloves properly scented—and the mere rabble, the 'Locofocos', comprising a majority of the voters of North Carolina who are totally unworthy of respectable treatment".

"The Whig press only speaks the language of cliques and small aristocratic associations, who indulge the comfortable position that either education, wealth, or social position give them a right, booted and spurred, to ride over the popular will, or rein it in to suit the purposes of ascendancy and power." *Natchez Free Trader*, quoted in *Jackson Southron*, Aug. 2, 1850.

yeomen rallied round the standard of their popular hero-leader and demanded Jackson's election to the presidency as a proper recognition of their aggressive democracy, the southern planters were quick to perceive that Jackson and his local supporters would be no respecters of conservative tradition. Macon of North Carolina was only one of many who for this reason did not want to see Jackson placed in the presidential chair.¹² They soon found, however, that their efforts to stem the surging flood were of no avail; before 1828 many of them reluctantly came to the conclusion that it was better to try to control and direct the rushing waters and thus mitigate the disaster than to meet them with a defiance that had already proved futile. Even after they had apparently been won over to the Jackson party, however, the line of social cleavage continued to exist and to be reflected in local political issues. Soon, indeed, as a logical outcome of the anomalies under this situation in the South, the Jackson party was met by a powerful opposition movement in which the southern planters played a conspicuous part. Social distinctions between the people of the black belt and the people of the back country were then able to reassert themselves and the social unity of each class had the inevitable effect of furthering and cementing their political unity.

The Whig party in the South, then, contrary to the prevailing notion that it drew its chief support from the non-slave-holding whites above the "mean white" class, was from its origin, and continued to be through-

¹² Wilson, *Congressional Career of Nathaniel Macon*, 86.

Benton was in 1824 a Clay man; Macon, Mangum, and other North Carolina and Georgia leaders were for Crawford, and Crawford himself preferred Adams to Jackson. Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 192; see also Mangum MSS.

out its history, the party of the planter and slave-holder—the aristocrat of the fertile black belt. The Democratic party, on the other hand, drew upon the opposite side of the social scale—especially upon the small farmer of the back hill-country who could always be reached by the party's appeal to the agrarian spirit. Proud of the name of conservatives, the Whigs sought to safeguard existing rights, privileges, and conditions. They dreaded the disorganizing and levelling tendencies which they beheld in the creed of their political opponents whom they regarded as dangerous and not to be trusted in politics. "There can be no reasonable doubt", declared a Whig organ discussing "Agrarianism", "that a very large portion of the 'democracy' of our country are bent upon the establishment of a new order of things."¹³ Their fears seemed about to be realized when the Democrats of the Alabama legislature, claiming "to represent the great mass of the people *versus* the aristocracy",¹⁴ substituted the "white" basis of apportionment of representation in Congress for the "federal" basis which included three-fifths of the slaves, in order to cut down the political importance of the cotton counties of that state.¹⁵

¹³ *Columbus Enquirer*, June 16, 1842. See also *ibid.*, May 24, 1842; *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, I, 235; *Niles' Register*, LV, 311; LVI, 250; *Dem. Rev.*, III, 106 ff.

¹⁴ DuBose, *Life of Yancey*, 110.

¹⁵ In the Alabama legislature of 1842-1843, the "white" basis was adopted on strictly party votes, but one Democrat in both houses voting with the united body of the Whigs against it. Garrett, *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama*, 246-250. The protest of the Whig minority was recorded on the house journal (p. 96). In an attempt somewhat later to rescind the "white" basis, the Whigs voted as a unit for the mixed basis, *ibid.*, 340-341. In 1850 this party line was just as distinct, *Mobile Advertiser*, Jan. 5, 1850.

There are certain indications which point to a hostility on the part of some of the non-slave-holding Democrats outside of the black belt

Looking upon the Democrats with mingled contempt and fear, the Whig planters determined their political affiliations in part as the result of this complex situation, a situation which proved to be the great friend of the national Whig party and the great enemy of sectionalism or sectional unity in the ante-bellum South. Inclined by nature and training toward active participation in politics, the planters could hardly content themselves with an isolated and uninfluential position in the political arena. They, therefore, continued the alliance that had been formed in the early thirties with the northern conservatives, aristocrats themselves,¹⁶ to break the power of Jacksonism.

Party divisions within the states on local political issues often helped to determine the vote of the citizen in the presidential election. Of no state was this more true than of Mississippi in the matter of her financial policy. During the flush times there, as elsewhere, in the middle thirties, there was a riot of extravagance and land speculation together with a great popularity for easily created capital in the form of the numerous and loosely managed state banking institutions.¹⁷ When the crash came and a severe panic had to be faced, relief and remedial measures did not effect the amelioration

to the institution of slavery itself. The Tuscaloosa *Monitor* of Sept. 8, 1860, declared that the local Democratic paper, the *Flag of the Union*, had in 1840 announced that the abolition of slavery would be the ultimate result of a triumphant democracy. According to the *Monitor*, the editor of the *Flag of the Union* went to no pains to conceal his hopes that the slaves would soon be freed.

¹⁶ Even in Illinois the tradition of aristocracy was linked with the Whig party. See Lincoln to M. M. Morris, March 26, 1843, Nicolay and Hay, *Works of Lincoln*, I, 262.

¹⁷ Baldwin, *Flush Times in Alabama and Mississippi*, 81, 84; *Nine Years of Democratic Rule in Mississippi*, 219.

intended, and the party in power—the Democratic—was held responsible for the situation.¹⁸ While the distress was at its height and with no relief in sight, the question was raised as to the obligations of the state in the case of certain bonds issued to pay for the state's stock in the Mississippi Union Bank. The bank having soon come to grief, the Democratic governor in his annual message attacked the validity of the sale of the bonds and led a popular movement for repudiation. In 1841 he urged such a step as one which would have the warmest approval of four-fifths of the people of the state.¹⁹ The Whig legislature, however, passed resolutions recognizing the obligation of the state to pay both interest and principal and declaring its intention to uphold the justice, honor, and dignity of the state.²⁰

In the elections that followed the question of repudiation became a party issue. The Whigs declared against that course but the Democrats were divided, with the bond-payers in a minority. The repudiators were almost invariably successful and the matter of repudiation became the paramount question at issue in Mississippi, completely overshadowing national politics.²¹ The Democratic party of Mississippi was thus connected with a course, persisted in for over a decade, which was generally discredited outside of the state²² and which was bitterly denounced by the growing body of bond-payers

¹⁸ Miss. Hist. Soc., *Publications*, IX, 185.

¹⁹ *Niles' Register*, LXI, 228.

²⁰ *Id.*, LX, 39.

²¹ Claiborne, *Life and Correspondence of Quitman*, I, 193; *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, I, *passim*; *Nine Years of Democratic Rule in Mississippi*, almost entirely given up to this question.

²² *Columbus Whig*, July 6, 1843, in *Niles' Register*, LXIV, 358.

within it. The result was that many Democrats were shaken in their confidence in their party and that the Whigs ceased to find in it an object for their respect.²³

In Georgia, the Whig legislature of 1840 under the leadership of the brilliant young Toombs refused to adopt a relief measure recommended by the governor in the shape of a proposition which would enable the state to loan money to distressed individual citizens. Though it became for the time a popular measure and carried the Democrats into office in the next election, the Georgia Whigs under able leaders stood distinctly for honest banking and sound finance; they consistently opposed, in the face of the popular clamor, the flood of relief measures that came before the legislature for consideration.²⁴

In the regular Whig states of the South, the position of the executives presented a marked contrast with that of the governors of Mississippi and Georgia. The governors of Kentucky and Louisiana absolutely refused to convene their legislatures in special session; they declared that the soundness of the currency and the confidence of the public in its integrity could not depend on local regulation, and that they looked to the general government—to Congress—to provide a remedy for the deranged condition of the currency.²⁵ The governor

²³ S. S. Prentiss to Crittenden, Dec., 1844, Crittenden MSS.

The Democratic press represented the situation as "a contest between a *privileged aristocracy, moneyed influence*, bonds and endless taxation and . . . Freedom, Justice, and Humanity". Vicksburg *Sentinel*, Nov. 7, 1843. Prentiss, an influential Whig, did advise that "the Whigs make it a *social and business* contest as well as a political one". *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, II, 239-240.

²⁴ Stovall, *Life of Toombs*, 33-39; Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 136; cf. Columbus *Enquirer*, March 9, 16, 29, 1842.

²⁵ Niles' *Register*, LII, 250, 325-326; *National Intelligencer*, June 13, 1837.

of Tennessee concurred in these sentiments and based his hopes for improvement upon a change of national administration.²⁶ With the Democrats in favor of relief legislation and the conservative elements in the southern states opposed, the Whigs found in the situation an additional reason for keeping party lines, both local and national, hard and fast.

Nor did this reason cease to exist when prosperity was finally restored. Experience had given the Democrats a severe shock and a reaction took place. Early in the forties Democrats generally began to display a marked hostility to all banks, state and national. This feeling against banking institutions continued to be especially bitter in Mississippi.²⁷ In Alabama the Democrats, consistently advocating a specie basis, also opposed even properly regulated banks.²⁸ Benton's influence made the argument for specie currency permanently popular among Missouri Democrats.²⁹ A Democratic organ at St. Louis declared: "When we hear of a Democrat in favor of a Bank, it leads us to suspect his Democracy. We expect rottenness in his composition. He is a false prophet—a wolf in sheep's clothing."³⁰ In Louisiana, Democratic hostility to banks deprived the state of monetary and banking facilities commensurate with its real needs.

The business and planting interests found this situa-

²⁶ *Niles' Register*, LVII, 137-138.

²⁷ L. Sanders to Crittenden, Sept. 20, 1846, Crittenden MSS.

²⁸ *Savannah Republican*, July 27, 1841; *Raleigh Register*, Dec. 31, 1841; *Mobile Advertiser*, July 3, 1849. For Georgia, cf. John H. Lumpkin to Cobb, Sept. 12, 1842, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

²⁹ *American Whig Review*, I, 18; *St. Louis Missourian*, Sept. 11, 1845; *St. Louis Intelligencer*, Dec. 18, 1850, Feb. 13, 1851; *Niles' Register*, LXIII, 259.

³⁰ *St. Louis Union*, in *St. Louis Intelligencer*, Feb. 14, 1851.

tion far from satisfactory. It hampered them in their financial operations, forcing them to pay a higher rate of interest for money and often to go outside of their own state to secure loans. They looked forward to an increase in banking capital, knowing that business facilities would witness a corresponding increase. While the Democrats looked upon banks as a source of almost all evils, the Whigs of Missouri and Louisiana came to advocate a satisfactory system of free banking.³¹ In Alabama, the Whigs proposed to secure an increase in capital and in circulation by chartering joint stock banks within the state.³² Virginia Whigs came to favor an increase in banking capital as an available issue which might bring Democratic control of the state to an end.³³

This banking movement was but one phase of a larger policy which the Whigs advocated in the southwestern states during all the forties and into the fifties. There the Democrats had been intrenched by years of control and the Whigs found plenty of opportunities for deploring the stagnancy of Democratic "misrule". This was especially true of the development of the natural resources of those states. All of them were recognized to be greatly behind their sister states in improvements of every kind although their resources gave no evidence of such inferiority.³⁴ There was a crying need for railroads, canals, and plankroads and for the improvement

³¹ St. Louis *Intelligencer*, March 25, 1851; New Orleans *Bulletin*, Sept. 26, 1849, Jan. 26, 1852; Butler, *Life of J. P. Benjamin*, 98, 107.

³² Mobile *Advertiser*, March 27, 31, April 12, 18, July 3, Nov. 17, 18, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, etc., 1849. Cf. DuBose, *Life of Yancey*, 117.

³³ Richmond *Whig*, March 28, 1851; June 11, 1852.

³⁴ Mobile *Advertiser*, June 6, 1849; Jackson *Southron*, Dec. 28, 1849; New Orleans *Bulletin*, March 1, Sept. 17, 1851.

of the river systems. This was especially noticeable in the case of New Orleans, the largest exporting city in the country, from which much trade was diverted because of lack of transportation facilities. The Democrats, however, were not favorable to works of internal improvement.³⁵ The Whigs were not long in seeing their opportunities as an opposition party. In Louisiana, they demanded the repeal of old impracticable laws and the removal of the constitutional restrictions upon progressive legislation.³⁶ In Mississippi, the Whig party made a last determined effort to recover itself in the days of its decline by taking up the cry of retrenchment and reform and by advocating the development of its natural resources especially by works of internal improvement.³⁷ The Alabama Whigs demanded that greater attention be given to state politics.³⁸ In Missouri, the Whig program for some years included railroad and other developments in the state.³⁹ The alert Whigs of Georgia, ever ready to see new opportunities, favored the policy of granting liberal charters to manufacturing companies for the purpose of encouraging local industry.⁴⁰

As the slavery issue came more and more to the front in national politics, a conscious effort was made by

³⁵ See *Niles' Register*, LXV, 342-343.

³⁶ *New Orleans Bulletin*, Feb. 13, March 9, 1850; Aug. 11, Sept. 17, 25, Oct. 6, Nov. 2, 1851.

³⁷ *Jackson Southron*, March 9, 1849; *Jackson Flag of the Union*, Feb. 11, March 18, 1853.

³⁸ *Mobile Advertiser*, June 6, 1849.

³⁹ *St. Louis Intelligencer*, Dec. 18, 1850, Feb. 13, March 19, 25, May 9, 1851. This was in contrast with Democratic "hatred of railroads, canals, turnpikes and common schools". *Am. Whig Rev.*, I, 18.

⁴⁰ The Democrats, however, objected to "the Massachusetts policy of incorporated wealth". H. Holsey to Cobb, Dec. 3, 1847, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

Whig managers to remove it from the field of local politics by directing attention to these state economic problems. They were forced into the background at the presidential elections and immediately brought forth again as soon as the canvass was over. In that way much was done toward keeping party spirit alive in the South.

Another factor in determining Whig strength in the South was the work of the southern Whig leaders, men of ability and of controlling personalities. Some were in the closing period of careers of public usefulness, wise and sage, ripened by years of experience. Others had just stepped upon the stage of national politics, young men but born leaders, sometimes rash and impetuous, but surrounded by influences that inclined to moderation. Able they all were, and in few instances has such a large group of able men been brought together to work under a single banner.⁴¹ The circumstances which gave birth to the party and which added to its power were such as to throw all the great leaders of the South in opposition to Jackson-Van Burenism and to furnish opportunities for new leaders to spring into prominence. Clay was, of course, the master mind of the party. Coming from a state on the border line between the North and the South and avowedly non-sectional in his views, he had an advantage which, with his personal qualities, peculiarly fitted him for the part he was called upon to play. He was regarded as the embodiment of Whig principles but was in reality the formulator of them. He was above all a leader—he knew how to make friends and how to keep them,

⁴¹ *Dem. Rev.*, II, 315. This was especially true before the withdrawal of Calhoun.

how to win men over to a measure and how to hold them to it. He was used to issuing commands and at the same time he made sure that they were carried out according to his instructions. According to Benton, he wielded his power in Congress especially through the party caucus,⁴² and his dictatorship cut down the number of independents to very few. His crowning victory came in Tyler's administration when he proved himself able to keep the great body of the Whig party together with the official influence of the government pulling in the opposite direction.

In Virginia the number of leaders was cut down to less than normal by the split with Tyler; Archer, Botts, Taliaferro, William B. Preston, and A. H. H. Stuart chose, however, to follow Clay rather than the president from their own state and were always able to give convincing proof of their orthodoxy. Summers of the Kanawha Valley district was an able advocate of Whig doctrines as well as of the interests of his own part of the state. Rives again returned to the Whig ranks before the election of 1844. North Carolina Whigs followed the guidance of a prominent set of leaders. Badger and Graham, original followers of Clay in the time of Adams's administration, constituted a connecting link between the Whig party there and the National Republicans. Mangum, who for the succeeding fifteen years occupied a leading place in North Carolina and national politics, was one of the leaders of the "State Rights Whig party" which was formed in the middle thirties, and became an ardent admirer of Henry Clay. Clingman, like Mangum and Graham, came from the western part of the state and later distinguished himself

⁴² Benton, *Thirty Years View*, II, 361.

for his defense of slavery and southern rights.⁴³ Only less prominent were Edward Stanly and Kenneth Rayner, the former one of the ablest champions of whiggery in Congress.⁴⁴

The state rights wing of the Whig minority in South Carolina was led by Preston⁴⁵ and Waddy Thompson, both of whom became close friends of Clay. James L. Petigru represented the broad construction element, bridging the gap which separated the Whig from the old Federalist party. This trio was shortly joined by Legaré and Yeadon from the Democratic ranks. Of the powerful group of Whig statesmen in Georgia, nearly all claimed to be followers of the precepts of Jeffersonian Democracy.⁴⁶ The sage of the party there was John M. Berrien, a thorough aristocrat whose hold upon his party continued up to his death. With him worked William C. Dawson and the inseparables, Toombs and Stephens, the Orestes and Pylades of politicians, aided within the state by Jenkins and Wilde. The ablest Whig in Alabama was probably Judge A. F. Hopkins, originally an Alexander Hamilton Federalist and always of latitudinarian inclinations.⁴⁷ More conspicuous, however, was the eloquent Hilliard of whom it was said that it was worth going the full length of the state to hear him pronounce the word "Alabama". He, Brodnax, and Judge B. F. Porter represented the

⁴³ In the fifties, when he turned Democrat, he carried his district for Congress as easily as formerly, though it afterward became Whig again. Dowd, *Prominent Living North Carolinians*, 16.

⁴⁴ J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, XI, 19.

⁴⁵ In Adams's mind one of the ablest men in Congress, *ibid.*, 249.

⁴⁶ Cf. Avary, *Recollections of A. H. Stephens*, 15; Miller, *Bench and Bar of Georgia*, I, 263; Wheeler, *History of Congress*, II, 62.

⁴⁷ Hilliard, *Politics and Pen Pictures*, 119; Garrett, *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama*, 377-379.

state rights brand of whiggery there.⁴⁸ Another gifted Whig orator from Alabama was James Dellet who for some time represented the Mobile district in Congress. He had supported Adams for president in 1828 and always subscribed fully to the party program.⁴⁹ Other Alabama leaders deserving of mention were Gayle, Alston, and Dent. The rank and file of the party in Mississippi received orders from an able corps of leaders, representing both wings. A list of these would be a long one, including Poindexter, Prentiss, Sharkey, Yerger, McClung, Guion, Alcorn, and Brooke.⁵⁰ In connection with Louisiana it is necessary but to mention the names of her Whig senators—Porter, Barrow, Johnson, Conrad, and later Benjamin.

In the Whig states of Kentucky and Tennessee where the problem was to conserve the strength of the party rather than to create a majority, the party workers were especially numerous, but in Kentucky they operated under chiefs who planned the various moves. There Clay shared the direction of affairs with such men as Crittenden, Letcher, Morehead, and Underwood, and matters usually went along smoothly. In the neighboring state of Tennessee the lack of proper controlling influences cut down the efficiency of the Whig machinery. Ambitious local leaders were too numerous for party harmony,⁵¹ and the more able ones like Williams,

⁴⁸ Garrett, 96, 317. "I confidently state that my influence over the press of the State, is greater than that of any other public man." H. W. Hilliard to Fillmore, April 22, 1851, Fillmore MSS.

⁴⁹ J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, X, 277.

⁵⁰ See Foote, *Bench and Bar of the South and Southwest*, and Lynch, *Bench and Bar of Mississippi*.

⁵¹ Conflicting sectional interests within the state added to the complication. *Niles' Register*, LXXIII, 209. In 1851, there were six Whig candidates for United States Senator representing the various sections. *Nashville Republican Banner*, Nov. 4, 6, 1851.

Bell, Jones, Gentry, and Brown seemed to lack the alertness and aggressiveness necessary to cope with the situation.⁵²

The task of this formidable array of talent was to further the interests of the party in so far as was consistent with sectional and local interests and personal ambitions. In some cases this did not mean a break with former principles but it did with several state rights Whigs when they yielded to the party's espousal of an increased, if not protective, tariff and a national bank. But rarely did this apparent inconsistency force them from the party. Had not strong reasons existed for their presence in it, they would probably have joined the exodus of the late thirties.⁵³ They saw the advantages of a national party to act as a check upon the Democrats. As sectionalism became more and more pronounced, they realized the necessity of making concessions to the northern wing of the party, as on matters of tariff policy, expecting that they would be met by concessions equally vital to the South. As members of Congress, therefore, they in general, aside from any particular personal attachments, cultivated cordial social relations with the northern Whig representatives and leaders at Washington, which always proved an invaluable foundation for acting in harmony with them in the formulation of the Whig program and in putting through Whig measures.⁵⁴

⁵² A list even so incomplete as this should not omit the names of Henry S. Geyer and Edward Bates of Missouri, of John M. Clayton of Delaware, and of Reverdy Johnson of Maryland, all of whom, besides their local leadership, had a powerful influence on Whigs of both sections on account of their advantage in hailing from border states.

⁵³ See Tyler, *Tylers*, II, 707.

⁵⁴ In recognition of the importance of this fact, we find Sargent, at the opening of the special session of 1841, suggesting the value of regular

Having thus convinced themselves and each other, the next step was but to define the obligations of party and to bring their constituencies in line. In this they were aided by the presence of definite northern influences in the South. The census returns of 1850 furnish the basis for a rough estimate of the proportion of persons of northern nativity to the total population of the southern states—it was by no means inconsiderable. In the settlement of Alabama, Mississippi, and the Southwest, the northern states contributed a larger share of emigrants than might have been expected in view of the distance to be traversed.⁵⁵ Representatives of the farming population of Ohio and western Pennsylvania were very frequently attracted by the agricultural resources of the South as revealed to their alert eyes while on their boating expeditions down the Mississippi. They often returned to take up land, became prosperous, and developed into slave-holders and large planters. From the commercial section of the North came young men who saw business opportunities in the new and growing cities of the South—opportunities to which southerners did not seem to be alive or which they did not appear to be capable of utilizing. They set up banks, mercantile houses, insurance offices, and newspaper presses, and bought up valuable pieces of real estate. New Orleans, Savannah, Augusta, Mobile, Vicksburg, Natchez, and even smaller

social as well as political intercourse between the Whigs of the various sections and proposing a plan which would "bring the Whigs of Congress together . . . socially once a week". N. Sargent to Mangum, June, 184[1], Mangum MSS. Weed later stated that his associations were stronger with the southern than with the northern Whig statesmen. Hudson, *History of Journalism*, 400.

⁵⁵ *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, I, 232-233; Garrett, *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama*, 35-36.

places experienced the benefits of the work done by these "Yankees".⁵⁶

Of this northern-born element a large number were advocates of federal paternalism—followers of Clay or of Webster. Many were skillful politicians endowed with ability to lead and to control political sentiment. They had first to overcome the prejudice against "Yankees"; but having done this, they had a profitable field for work in the new states where the population was young and especially susceptible to change of opinion.

What could be done in such conditions is best shown by the career of Sargent S. Prentiss in Mississippi. Arriving from Maine a lame, lisping boy, within a dozen years he became the idol of the state and henceforth there was never a time when, in the estimation of his friends, he could not have carried the popular vote of the state.⁵⁷ An avowed opponent of Jeffersonian strict construction and a strong admirer of Clay and more especially of Webster,⁵⁸ he was always a devoted Whig and for a long time the standard-bearer of the Whigs of Mississippi.⁵⁹ Many followed almost blindly the course which he advocated and the orthodoxy of the members of the party there was measured by the standards which he set up. In 1837, in his canvass for reelection to Congress he made the national bank the issue as the leading item on the Whig program there. In that campaign he visited forty-five counties in the state on an election tour of ten weeks, averaged thirty miles a day

⁵⁶ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 1134-1135, 1189, 1193; *Claiborne, Mississippi*, I, 409; *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, I, 184.

⁵⁷ Baldwin, *Flush Times in Alabama and Mississippi*, 197, 212; *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, II, 141.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 240; *Claiborne, Life and Times of General Dale*, 220-221.

⁵⁹ *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 403; *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, I, 238.

on horseback, spoke two hours on each week day, and did not miss a single appointment.⁶⁰ It was his practice before addressing a public meeting to present resolutions and then to speak on them.⁶¹ As an advocate of a national bank and of a protective tariff and as an opponent of repudiation, this was a skillful way of setting his position before the people. His leadership in the state only ended after his departure to a new sphere of influence.

To the state of Mississippi, there came also a New England peddler, D. O. Shattuck. He became in succession a Methodist minister, an able judge, and finally in 1841, the candidate of the Whig party for governor on an anti-repudiation platform.⁶² In Alabama, Charles C. Langdon, another New Englander, as editor of the *Mobile Advertiser*, mayor of Mobile, member of the state legislature, and through all an active Whig leader, had a strong influence over the working of his own party and that of his opponents, having been regarded even by the latter as sound on questions of state policy and those concerning the general welfare.⁶³

The southern Whig press, too, had definite connections with the northern wing of the party. Many of its editors were northerners or under northern influence. There were the editor and poet, George D. Prentice of the *Louisville Journal*; George W. Kendall of the *New Orleans Picayune*; John C. Bates, of the *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, and his colleague Langdon, already mentioned, of the *Mobile Advertiser*; J. L. Locke of

⁶⁰ *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, I, 217, 228, 242-243. Cf. F. Huston to Crittenden, Dec. 1, 1837, Crittenden MSS.

⁶¹ Shields, *Life of Prentiss*, 312.

⁶² *Niles' Register*, LX, 90.

⁶³ Garrett, *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama*, 119, 184.

the Savannah *Republican*; and others of scarcely less prominence.⁶⁴ All of northern birth and education, they became good southerners and sound on the problems that were peculiar to their adopted section. But they remained loyal national Whigs and moulded and shaped party feeling in the wide area of their influence as editors of metropolitan dailies. It would be proper to add to this group such men as General Duffield of the Natchez *Courier*, who, as the warm personal and political friend of S. S. Prentiss, often followed the course which the latter suggested to him.⁶⁵ Another important influence was that of "parson" Brownlow and his *Whig* which he claimed had a larger circulation than any other paper in Tennessee.⁶⁶ He regarded himself as a federal Whig of the Washington and Alexander Hamilton school and advocated a "concentrated Federal Government";⁶⁷ on the other hand, he was a bold defender of the institution of slavery and hence able to represent the interests of the South.

A complete survey of the Whig press of the South would require more than a mere mention of the Richmond *Whig* and the Charleston *Courier*.⁶⁸ The former, long edited by James H. Pleasants, displayed strong state rights sentiments in the days of South Carolina

⁶⁴ Every leading Whig journal of North Carolina, except the Raleigh *Register*, was edited by a northerner, and Joseph Gales of the *Register* was a native Englishman and had previously published a newspaper in Philadelphia. Cf. Wheeler, *History of North Carolina*, 114.

⁶⁵ *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, II, 225.

⁶⁶ Brownlow, *Rise, Progress, and Decline of Secession*, 18.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 20. He and Colonel Alexander McClung, editor of the Jackson *True Issue*, one of the most influential papers of the Southwest, were among the native southerners who contended for nationalist principles in that quarter. Foote, *Casket of Reminiscences*, 439.

⁶⁸ Also of the Nashville *Republican Banner*, the New Orleans *Bulletin*, and the Whig press at Memphis.

nullification, but developed with the party, and soon led Whig sentiment in Virginia, laboring unceasingly for harmony within the party and, according to Upshur, flogging "everything like spirit out of the State-rights men".⁶⁹ The *Charleston Courier* was for some time edited and managed by Richard Yeadon, a strong Union man and a supporter of Jackson, who, however, declared for the Whig party after the campaign of 1840 and subscribed to the full program of his new associates including the tariff, which he was soon defending as both constitutional and expedient.⁷⁰

The Whig press of the South as a whole looked toward the *National Intelligencer*, the central organ of whiggery, as a model in which they had unlimited confidence. They relied upon it not only for reports of speeches but for the views expressed in its editorial columns as well. There was, moreover, that close connection with the *Raleigh Register*, a leading southern Whig journal, which was insured by the relationship between the editors.⁷¹ Webster said of Gales and Seaton: "Those, sir, are two of the wisest and best heads in this country; as to Mr. Gales, he knows more about the history of this government than all the political writers of the day put together."⁷² The *National Intelligencer* was of course the representative of Whig orthodoxy as defined at the nation's capital and the sentiments expressed were always of high-toned nationalism. On the other hand, it recognized the responsi-

⁶⁹ Tyler, *Tylers*, II, 702.

⁷⁰ *Am. Whig Rev.*, XI, 481-482.

⁷¹ Joseph Gales of the *Register* was the father of Gales and father-in-law of Seaton of the *National Intelligencer*. *Niles' Register*, LXI, 16.

⁷² Hudson, *History of Journalism*, 234.

bility of its position as "occupying the isthmus between the geographical divisions of the country both as to locality and as to feeling".⁷³ It was strong, too, in its direct influence on the individual Whig voter in the South where it enjoyed a circulation of remarkable extent.⁷⁴

Perhaps the closest contact between the Whig presses of the two sections came on the occasion of the festival of Whig editors at Washington on the day following Harrison's inauguration. Gathering from all parts of the Union but laying aside state feeling and sectional prejudices, they made common pledges and drank the toasts proposed by the southern representatives to the unity of feeling and interest between the North and the South. Carrying this spirit of harmony home with them, they prepared for the administration of the first Whig president.⁷⁵

The southern Whigs acted under a combination of motives produced by the conditions that have been described when they were brought face to face with Clay's legislative program in the extra session of 1841. To many of its opponents even, this program did not come unexpectedly. Indeed, expressions of Whig sentiment in various parts of the South seemed to indicate a demand even there for the measures proposed. The situation would seem to have vindicated Clay's policy of the later thirties regarding the bank. He had given his pledge to wait for a popular demand for such an insti-

⁷³ *National Intelligencer*, March 6, 1837.

⁷⁴ "Everybody took the *National Intelligencer*, then edited by Messrs. Gales and Seaton, who were men of sterling honesty, with strong Federal views. . . . They believed all they published, and, as a consequence, the Whigs believed them." Mrs. Davis, *Jefferson Davis*, I, 189.

⁷⁵ *National Intelligencer*, March 8, 1837.

tution. Until recently political considerations had prevented anything like a sincere expression of opinion on the subject. Democrats who at heart favored a national bank took part in the party outcry against all proposals for the establishment of one.⁷⁶ It was only after other remedies were tried and found wanting or objectionable in character—after the supporters of those remedies were driven into a minority, that it was possible to realize to what extent popular opinion in the South was favorable to a remedy along the lines of the old United States Bank.

Great changes of opinion on the subject of a national bank were reported as having taken place in all parts of the South, even in Virginia.⁷⁷ Southerners claimed to have learned their lessons in the school of adversity. The financial stringency and the disordered and uncertain condition of the currency that began in 1837 was attributed to Jackson's destruction of the bank.⁷⁸ It was natural for a strict state rights man in 1832 to entertain doubts as to the constitutionality of the bank; it was almost equally reasonable for him, "with the lights now before him and after the experience of the last seven years", to favor a national bank.⁷⁹ Governor Dudley of

⁷⁶ A. Porter to Crittenden, July 2, 1837, Crittenden MSS.

⁷⁷ *National Intelligencer*, May 3, 11, 18-20, 22, etc., 1841; *Columbus Enquirer*, May 5, 12, July 28, Aug. 11, 1841.

"We have been surprised at the extent of change in favor of a restoration of a bank of the United States. Nor is the change by any means confined to the Whig party. It pervades all parties. It reaches all classes." *Richmond Whig*, May 5, 1841.

⁷⁸ *Raleigh Register*, April 13, 1841; *Louisville Journal*, May 14 1841.

⁷⁹ *Raleigh Register*, July 2, 1841; cf. J. H. Lumpkin to Cobb, Sept. 12, 1842. *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*. An Alabama Democrat wrote in 1842: "If a majority of the people desire a U. S. Bank they ought to have one under the plea of necessity. This plea I verily believe can be sustained." John Mushat to Mangum, Feb. 7, 1842, Mangum MSS.

North Carolina undertook to define in his annual message of November, 1840 the desire of the Whigs of that state for a national bank. When the special session of Congress opened, both Senators Mangum and Graham stated that the Whigs of North Carolina were almost universally in favor of such an institution, and that many of the other party participated in this feeling.⁸⁰ The upper house of the Georgia legislature passed resolutions denying the constitutional right of Congress to charter a bank or to impose a protective tariff, but the great body of the Whigs voted against them.⁸¹ A large majority of the newly elected Whig delegation to Congress from Virginia was counted upon as favorable to a national bank,⁸² and a meeting of the Charleston Whigs shortly before the opening of the session expressed its approval of an increased revenue tariff and defended the constitutionality of a United States bank as "settled by reason, by authority and by experience of its indispensable utility".⁸³ Indeed, Colonel Preston had declined to consider the position of secretary of the navy in Harrison's cabinet through fear that by his resigning from the Senate the bank might be defeated in that body by the casting vote of the new vice-president.⁸⁴ Maryland Whigs were amazed that Merrick, one of their senators, could think of voting against a national bank measure on the ground that Tyler intended to veto it.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ *Cong. Globe*, 27 Cong., 1 sess., 116; *Raleigh Register*, June 29; *Louisville Journal*, July 2, 1841.

⁸¹ *Niles' Register*, LIX, 275.

⁸² *Id.*, LX, 172, 196.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 308-309; *Savannah Republican*, May 28, 1841.

⁸⁴ Tyler, *Tylers*, II, 16-17; cf. letter of Senator Preston, in *Columbus Enquirer*, May 12, 1841.

⁸⁵ Reverdy Johnson to Mangum, July 13, 1841, Mangum MSS.

As chief executive, Tyler found the number of southerners who inclined to support him in his opposition to the bank measures proposed by Congress gradually reduced to the faithful little following from Virginia.⁸⁵ With that exception the southern members of the party rallied to the support of both bank bills and severely condemned the president for his vetoes.⁸⁷ When the breach came, the southerners in the cabinet were easily induced to resign and the Whig caucus which drew up the manifesto reading Tyler out of the party was directed by Senator Mangum of North Carolina, who offered the resolution for the preparation of the address. The necessity of defining orthodox whiggery in that document served to strengthen the results of the bank vetoes in rallying the Whigs of all sections around definite principles.

These events at the capital required a readjustment of party lines within the states, which could only mean losses for the Whigs. The great majority, however, of the party in the South held firm and decided to throw Tyler overboard. Active Tyler Whigs were not numerous, but many earnest Whig voters dissented from the course which the majority had taken and had to determine their own status.⁸⁸ The results were felt in the state elections when nearly every southern state witnessed a perceptible falling of its Whig vote, regularly

⁸⁵ Tyler, *Tylers*, II, 47, 57; Wise, *Seven Decades*, 206; Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 161, 164.

⁸⁷ See *Savannah Republican*, Sept. 16, 18; *Columbus Enquirer*, Sept. 8, 22, etc., 1841.

Leslie Combs wrote to Crittenden, Aug. 27, 1841, denouncing the president and declaring that Tyler lived and breathed "in the charcoal Atmosphere of old William and Mary abstractions". Crittenden MSS.

⁸⁸ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 495, 496, 832; *Louisville Journal*, Sept. 15, 1841; ——— to Mangum, May 23, 1842, Mangum MSS.

accompanied by Democratic gains. In Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana, the shift was important enough to substitute Democratic majorities for the decided Whig ones of 1840.

The general condemnation of Tyler by the Whigs led to an active movement in favor of Clay as the leader of orthodox whiggery. When the former first showed signs of wavering, Whig sentiment prepared itself for a rally around the Clay standard.⁸⁹ State rights Whigs who had been won over to the party measures were no less active than the Whigs of nationalistic training. Organs of both groups promptly posted Clay's name for the presidency. "With a unanimity seldom if ever before manifested by the Whig party", it was declared, "he has been taken up and recommended for the next Presidency by the Whig press in every portion of the Union."⁹⁰ Within ten months apparently every Whig paper in Georgia was out for Clay.⁹¹ The North Carolina Whigs made early preparations for a state convention in which to promulgate a formal nomination.⁹² This whole movement would seem to show, if we had no other evidence, that the southern Whigs had come to accept Clay's policy not only as to the bank but also as to the other leading question—the tariff. The direct evidence, however, on this point requires some further attention.

In facing the problem of meeting the existing revenue deficiency, the Whigs had in the next session to aban-

⁸⁹ Reverdy Johnson to Mangum, Aug. 27, 1841, Mangum MSS.

⁹⁰ Tuscumbia *North Alabamian*, Oct. 30, 1841; cf. Savannah *Republican*, Sept. 13; Columbus *Enquirer*, Sept. 14, 1841.

⁹¹ Wm. Graham to P. H. Mangum, June 4, 1842, Mangum MSS.

⁹² C. P. Green to Mangum, Nov. 17, Dec. 10, 1841, Mangum MSS.; Raleigh *Register*, Dec. 3, 1841.

don the compromise tariff arrangement, and the southern members were compelled to share in the transaction. The situation, however, was different from what it had been in 1832. Then Toombs and Berrien were little short of fiery nullifiers, though they afterward denied the correctness of the nullification theory; then Mangum and Rayner were vigorous opponents of the protective doctrine; and few southerners were to be found, except in Kentucky and Louisiana, who did not voice more or less indignation at the high tariff system.

Within a decade, however, the South had seen cotton factories set up by enterprising citizens in all of its Atlantic seaboard states amid the forecasts of the protectionists that it, too, would soon realize the merits of their arguments.⁹³ Many were awakened to the possibility that at some time the manufacturing interests might not be in so great a minority there and that the development of the natural resources of the South might remove the sectional line which defined the southern limits of the protectionist zone. North Carolina came to have several manufacturing centres, the most important of all at Fayetteville;⁹⁴ Virginia, Georgia, and to a less extent South Carolina and the Gulf states were beginning to make the break with the past.⁹⁵

"The views of southern people have been much changed of late years", declared the *Savannah Republican*, "and they do not view protective duties with quite so distempered an eye, for their own factories are already growing up".⁹⁶ The *Richmond Whig* frankly

⁹³ *Niles' Register*, XLV, 4, 242, XLIV, 266.

⁹⁴ *Id.*, L, 378; LV, 360; LVI, 64; LVIII, 136, 230; LX, 131-132; LXIV, 272; *Raleigh Register*, Sept. 7, 21, Dec. 14, 1841.

⁹⁵ *Savannah Republican*, Aug. 12, 19, 28, Sept. 6, 9, 1841.

⁹⁶ *Savannah Republican*, July 17, 1841.

confessed its error: "Though long and deeply steeped ourselves in the popular prejudice against the tariff, our minds have not been entirely sealed to the revelations of experience. . . . We would not now, as we have done before, assert without qualification, that under the existing commercial regulations of the world, a high tariff would not be beneficial to the country."⁹⁷ The editor of the *Columbus Enquirer* was not ashamed to admit that he had gone over to Clay's doctrines: "We used to be a tolerably hotheaded nullifier in our boyish days, when our heads were turned inside out by the glittering bauble of an impracticable free trade system, which we were fool enough to think within the range of possibilities—and so far as the *principles* involved in the *nullification* doctrine are concerned, we hope never to abandon them. But we may as well confess that our free trade notions are looked upon at this time as the vagaries of an unduly excited imagination."⁹⁸ Another southern journal, reflecting on the depressed state of the cotton market, cotton having fallen to the extremely low price of five cents and less a pound, saw that self interest was leading the South away from the doctrine of free trade: "Free trade with all its beauties has brought with it few or no benefits but rather a train of calamities, and we find the whole South laboring under a complete prostration of prosperity."⁹⁹

Soon the arguments for protection were placed before the people of the South. It was pointed out that the

⁹⁷ *Richmond Whig*, in *Louisville Journal*, July 12, 1841.

⁹⁸ *Columbus Enquirer*, May 26, 1842; cf. *id.*, June 16.

⁹⁹ *Savannah Georgian*, in *Niles' Register*, LXII, 18; cf. *Columbus Enquirer*, Aug. 10, 1841: "Free Trade and Low Prices for Cotton."

great staples of cotton and rice enjoyed and needed such protection—that they would probably be ruinously affected by even the final reduction under the compromise tariff, that the condition of a surplus of raw products could only be removed by encouraging domestic industry and, if necessary, by taking labor and capital from the field of production and applying it to that of manufacturing. It was argued that the prosperity of the South depended upon that of the North, that their interests, instead of conflicting, were similar and mutually dependent, and that the interests of both would be fostered by a tariff which would act as a barrier to keep foreign competition from ruining American industry.¹⁰⁰ The Jackson *Southron* announced the results of such reasoning: “The people of the south and west, who until recently, were opposed to protection, are retracing their steps almost unanimously. In two years time, there will hardly be a single southern man of intelligence opposed to the tariff principles.”¹⁰¹

The cotton-growers were frightened by another development. They had early been warned that the future would bring competition in the English market from cotton grown in India and the East Indies;¹⁰² they had been told that perhaps at some time they would themselves desire an increase over the existing duty on imported raw cotton to prevent disastrous competition from Brazil and Texas for the local market.¹⁰³ In the

¹⁰⁰ Raleigh *Register*, Sept. 7; Savannah *Republican*, Oct. 5, 1841. The Columbus *Enquirer*, June 30, 1842, pointed out that it was merely a matter of equity: “We drove New England from the ocean to the spindle.”

¹⁰¹ Niles' *Register*, LXII, 336; cf. T. Ritchie to C. Campbell, April 6, 1842, John P. Branch Papers, III, 248.

¹⁰² Niles' *Register*, XLIV, 97.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 13.

early forties the danger seemed to become a real one when the press of the country gave great currency to the rumor that cotton was being successfully grown in India and in sufficient quantities to indicate that it would soon be able to supply the market in England.¹⁰⁴ The development of a home market for southern cotton seemed at once essential and the method decided upon to secure it was naturally the advocacy of a protective tariff to make home manufactures profitable.¹⁰⁵ A convention of cotton planters at Mobile, taking cognizance of the situation, agreed to recommend a protective duty upon all imported manufactured articles as a means of securing themselves and their interests.¹⁰⁶ The free trade journals found it impossible to check the spread of this sentiment, and the tendency grew for planters to look to a moderate protective tariff as the remedy against the permanence of the existing low value of their crops and other disastrous results of the continued financial distress.¹⁰⁷

As the reductions under the compromise tariff were made and as the time approached for the minimum scale to be applied, the tariff sections of the South added their complaints and protests to those of the northern manufacturers, and began to urge the adoption of a higher tariff. The sugar growers of Louisiana, the hemp manufacturers of Kentucky and Missouri, and the wool, salt, iron, and other manufacturing interests of Virginia described the situation as critical and

¹⁰⁴ *Savannah Republican*, July 27, Sept. 4, 6, 23, 1841; *Raleigh Register*, Dec. 10, 1841; *Columbus Enquirer*, Jan. 26, 1842.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*; *Charleston Courier*, in *Niles' Register*, LXII, 18.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 71, 80; *Raleigh Star*, in *Washington (N. C.) Whig*, April 13, 1842.

¹⁰⁷ *Niles' Register*, LXII, 309-310, 336.

petitioned for an increase of duties to avert impending ruin.¹⁰⁸

To these conditions the southern Whig members of Congress tried to respond while laboring on the problem of tariff revision. The very fact that the change was primarily to satisfy the needs of an empty treasury enabled them to preserve an apparent consistency in their views on the tariff, for none were willing to substitute any scheme of internal taxation for the tariff as a means of supplying the government with revenue. While disavowing any intention of having a purely protective tariff fastened upon the country as a result of the Whig victory,¹⁰⁹ they were able to make concessions to the protectionists by advocating discriminating duties so laid as incidentally to protect and foster home industry. In this they went no further than many southern Democrats, who regarded incidental protection as the only reasonable and just arrangement and entirely in harmony with the traditions of the past.¹¹⁰ Where they did differ from their opponents was in deciding what constituted a revenue duty as against a protective duty on the various articles. In this regard, too, they were not always willing to concede the justness of the schedules desired by the northern Whigs. Differences of opinion within the party on the tariff as well as differences with regard to the scheme for the distribution of the proceeds of the public land sales were taken up with a view to harmonious action in the party meetings which were held regularly during the critical

¹⁰⁸ *Niles' Register*, LXII, 96, 112, 211; LXI, 384; Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 180; J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, XI, 138, 198.

¹⁰⁹ See speeches of Gamble of Georgia, June 15, July 7, *Cong. Globe*, 27 Cong., 2 sess., 636, 731.

¹¹⁰ See Crittenden's speech of July 29, 1842, *ibid.*, 808.

period.¹¹¹ The votes on the various bills—the two measures which Tyler vetoed as well as the one which finally received his signature—showed that the majority of the southern members of the party had been brought into line.¹¹² Likewise, in 1844, the Democratic measure which proposed to repeal the existing tariff met absolutely no support from southern Whigs.¹¹³

Before the work of tariff revision had been accomplished the supporters of Clay in North Carolina, finding it difficult to repress the desire to honor their leader, launched through their state convention a movement in favor of his election to succeed Tyler.¹¹⁴ This step was followed promptly by similar action on the part of the state rights Whigs of Georgia and later repeated by Whig conventions in most of the southern states. Clay's popularity in the South was now at a greater height than ever and his chances of getting the vote of that section were conceded to be better than those of any of the probable candidates of the Democratic party.

Taking advantage of this situation, Clay accepted the much extended invitation of the Whigs of North Carolina and promised to visit their state in the spring

¹¹¹ Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 188, 193-194; cf. J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, XI, 228. Clay aided the Whigs in overcoming the obstacles in their path by advice and direction from his retirement at Ashland, *ibid.*

¹¹² The southern Whig votes against the measure as finally passed came partly from those opposed to the surrender of the land distribution feature to the president's mandate. Some of them, as Mangum, Graham, and Berrien, would have voted in the affirmative had their votes been needed. Sargent, *Public Men and Events*, II, 187. Cf. J. S. Kerr to Wm. D. Merrick, Sept. 24, 1842, Kerr MSS.

¹¹³ Chappell of Georgia alone voted with the Democrats which forced him to throw in his lot with that party, and he was defeated for reelection by a Whig opponent. *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 323.

¹¹⁴ See Wm. A. Graham to Mangum, March 9; H. W. Miller to Mangum, April 3; C. L. Hinton to Mangum, April 5, 1842, Mangum MSS.

of 1844. This was soon expanded into a tour of the Gulf and seaboard states of the South which began at the close of his winter sojourn in New Orleans. Whigs along the line of his route were aroused to great enthusiasm at the possibility of seeing the great statesman and party leader in their midst. His reception was everywhere elaborately prepared for¹¹⁵ and he passed on from one demonstration of his popularity to another. As important as the public receptions, ceremonies, and ovations, were the personal meetings and close associations with the party leaders who entertained him and who listened willingly to his suggestions.

In his public speeches Clay avoided any semblance of electioneering but reviewed the history of the Whig cause, the principles for which the party struggled, and the measures it had passed in the opportunity which had recently been given to it. He saw no reason for avoiding an expression of his views upon the tariff. He had, indeed, displayed a wise moderation in laying down the rules by which the party had been guided in making the readjustment of 1842.¹¹⁶ Now he repeated in his speeches at Milledgeville, Savannah, Charleston, and Raleigh, the views which he had been giving out in his Tennessee and Georgia letters¹¹⁷ against the opposite extremes of free trade and prohibitive duties and in favor of moderate discriminating schedules. He calmed the fears of many who dreaded the danger of a high tariff by assuring them that American manufactures were beginning to show sufficient stability to re-

¹¹⁵ See *Savannah Republican*, March 18, 21, 1844.

¹¹⁶ See his speech on his tariff resolutions, March 1, 1842, *Niles' Register*, LXII, 39-43.

¹¹⁷ Published at the time in the *Tennessee Agriculturist*, Lagrange (Ga.) *Herald*, and *Georgia Journal*.

move them from the class of infant industries and that the amount of protection needed by them would regularly decrease.¹¹⁸

These principles were identical with those that the southern Whig leaders were announcing both in and out of Congress, in their own section and in the North. In a speech at New York immediately after the adjournment of Congress in 1842, Senator Berrien praised the Whig tariff with its protective features and even advocated the land distribution project as a test of party orthodoxy.¹¹⁹ From the state which, next to South Carolina, had protested most loudly against protection in the preceding decade, there now went at various times T. Butler King, Toombs, Dawson, and again Berrien to the cities of New York and Boston, there to gain recognition from their tariff speeches as friends of commercial prosperity, of national rather than sectional interests, and of white rather than of slave labor. Insisting upon the identity of Whig principles throughout the Union, they argued for the removal of the sectional line which wrongly separated interests that were identical, they advocated the expediency of protection to domestic industry as essential to national wealth and national morality, and closed with an invocation to the party to stand by its principles and its measures.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 105-106, 120, 297-299; *Savannah Republican*, March 25, 1844. Clay wrote to Crittenden from Savannah: "I have not seen one Whig during my journey who is not satisfied with the ground on which I place the principle of protection in connection with a tariff for revenue". Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 218.

¹¹⁹ *Niles' Register*, LXIII, 111.

¹²⁰ Wheeler, *History of Congress*, II, 50; Stovall, *Life of Toombs*, 46; Miller, *Bench and Bar of Georgia*, I, 68-69; *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 188, 348-349. Berrien, who in 1831 had denied the constitutionality of a tariff for protection and who had taken a leading part in the "Free Trade" convention at Philadelphia in September of that year, declared

In Congress at the same time, Clingman and Stephens defined their position in quite similar language with the entire support of their constituents.

As the tariff became better understood in the South, it lost many of its terrors for the people. It was given credit for the restoration of prosperity which was coincident with the enactment of the new measure.¹²¹ When in the elections of 1843 this change was put to the test of the popular vote, it became clear that the Whigs had lost none of their strength in the South.¹²² As the presidential canvass drew near the Virginia Whigs taunted their opponents for the failure of their predictions as to the effect of the tariff; they accepted the issue, and announced their intention to go before the country on the tariff of 1842 "in principle and in detail".¹²³

The situation in the South was clearly favorable to Clay on outstanding issues. His southern tour, coming directly before the national convention, made his nomination by that body, as the unanimous choice of the party, a foregone conclusion. Whigs of all sections were enthusiastic in their admiration for the great Kentuckian while the Democratic party was rent by struggling factions.¹²⁴

in a Fourth of July speech at Boston in 1844 that free trade was "a fallacy uttered but to deceive! A thing practically for the advantage of foreign nations, ruinous . . . to our own holy brotherhood", and that the question of protection was "a question connected vitally with every great interest of the whole country, on which is made to depend the national morality". *Ibid.*

¹²¹ S. F. Miller to Clay, June 20, 1842, Miller, *Bench and Bar of Georgia*, II, 386; J. Manney to Mangum, Feb. 2, 1846, Mangum MSS.

¹²² Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 480.

¹²³ Address of Virginia Whig convention, *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 7-11.

¹²⁴ Cf. Garnett Andrews to Cobb, March 29; Thos. Ritchie to Cobb, May 6, 1844, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*. Cf. H. F. Regolee to Mangum, Feb. 14, 1844, Mangum MSS.

It was a glorious achievement for the Whig party that the southern wing was brought into line on the leading questions of national policy. It meant that thousands of southerners who a dozen years before were staunch state rights Republicans, "prepared to peril life, property, and everything but freedom, in opposition to a protective tariff", were assigned to the ranks to battle side by side with the champions of the protective policy.¹²⁵ Nor was this entirely the unavoidable consequence of party organization, or of the moral sense of party obligations. For evidence of this fact it is necessary but to point to a man like Yeadon of Charleston who, in that environment, abandoned the Democratic party to become a tariff man, who embraced protection and all, and who even argued that South Carolina "ought to be, would be, and should be a tariff state".¹²⁶ A perplexing problem had been satisfactorily solved. But the party was not to be left for any length of time without some equivalent complication. The statement which Clay issued from Raleigh of a definite position on the vital question of Texan annexation brought into party politics the slavery issue in the most acute form it had yet assumed. Thus the force of sectionalism was again set in motion. This time it was destined to run its full course, entangling the party lines which had thus far withstood the powerful influences tending to confuse them.

¹²⁵ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 1110.

¹²⁶ *Niles' Register*, LXVII, 26.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SLAVERY QUESTION TO 1848.

When the Whig party came into existence the supporters of the institution of negro slavery had already been placed upon the defensive. But the Whig party of the South was preeminently, though not exclusively, the party of the slave-holder; in its ranks it included a considerable majority of the large cotton, tobacco, rice, and sugar planters. The plotted vote by counties of the presidential elections from 1836 to 1852 reveals, in all the states crossed by the black belt except in North and South Carolina, a decided coincidence between the Whig strongholds and the regions where the slave population was in a majority or nearly so. It may be stated as a rough but conservative estimate that the Whig party in the South, while perhaps not embracing more than a substantial majority of all the slave-holders, included the possessors of from two-thirds to three-fourths of the slave property of the South.¹

With definite interests in the "peculiar institution", state rights Whigs, especially, came out boldly in its defense against the abolitionists and the other anti-slavery forces. Agitation was bitterly denounced and various remedies to put an end to it were suggested, many of them of the more extreme sort. From the *Richmond Whig* and other journals came the proposal, seri-

¹ Cf. *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Sept. 2, 1850; *Richmond Whig*, Feb. 4, 1850; *Richmond Republican*, in *Washington Republic*, Aug. 18, 1851; see also maps in appendix, below.

ously considered for a time, to suspend commercial intercourse with the northern states as one way of forcing a discontinuance of the activity of the abolitionists.² The northern political journals were challenged to speak out and to reveal their attitude toward the cause of the agitators.³ Senator Preston of South Carolina, moreover, was reported to have declared in the Senate that if the people in his state could catch an abolitionist there they would most certainly try him and hang him. In the House, Wise was the advocate of the extreme southern view in denying the power of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia. Acting in connection with the party, too, in its early years was Calhoun who, seeing the danger that threatened the institution of slavery, came to the rescue as its foremost champion.

The southern Whigs claimed to be the special friends of southern interests. In 1836 they made good use of the argument that they were offering a slave-holder as their candidate for president. The abolition question had an important influence on that contest, leading many to support White who felt that sides must be taken at once on this new issue.⁴ Virginia Democrats complained that the Whigs were trying to embroil them with their northern friends.⁵

In defining their political relations, however, the character of the northern wing of the party had to be taken

² *Richmond Whig*, Sept. 10, *New Orleans Bee*, Sept. 11, 1835, *U. S. Telegraph*, in *Niles' Register*, XLIX, 77-78.

³ *Richmond Whig*, in *National Intelligencer*, June 2, 1837. The *National Intelligencer*, however, considered it its duty to exclude the discussion of the slavery question from its columns, March 1, 1837.

⁴ I. E. Morse to J. B. Kerr, March 12, May 10, 1836, Kerr MSS.

⁵ R. H. Parker to Van Buren, Dec. 25, 1835, Van Buren MSS. The Whigs of eastern Virginia were extremely hostile to the abolition movement. Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia*, 224.

into consideration. Within it there was a tendency toward hostility to slavery in a much greater degree than could be noted in the northern Democracy.⁶ The ultra-southern Whigs were not long in seeing this. The motive behind Calhoun's abandonment of the Whig coalition was in part the desire to place himself in a position more favorable to a defense of slavery, which he saw would soon be the leading political question before the country.⁷ More independent than most of the southern Whigs, Calhoun refused to continue in the opposition when he found that he could not bring the northern members into a sound position. He then forced them to show their hands by introducing his famous slavery resolutions of December, 1837, into the Senate.⁸

The southern members who had reasons for remaining in the party, which overbalanced this and other disadvantages, were not allowed to close their eyes to the situation in the North. The Democrats in their section kept them informed and denounced them as traitors to their own interests and enemies of their own institutions for leaguings themselves with abolitionists.⁹ Involuntarily, perhaps, but very perceptibly, the southern Whigs, especially after Calhoun and his radicals left, became more moderate in their defense of slavery.

Here again they had the example of their leader before them. Clay had tried to reconcile northern and southern interests when he offered his resolutions in the Senate as substitutes for the more radical state rights ones of Calhoun. These calmed the solicitude of

⁶ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 434, 438; *Calhoun Correspondence*, 409.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 408-409.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 386-390.

⁹ *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, I, 379; *Raleigh Standard*, March 21, 1837.

the more moderate southerners, many of whom were unwilling to believe that the South had no other friends besides Calhoun and his little party.¹⁰ Others, however, demanded more, and when Clay saw the importance of securing the endorsement of the southern senators to his presidential aspirations, he found it necessary to take more advanced ground. So, after he had consulted with such southern members as Preston, by whom he was probably advised to take this step,¹¹ he came out in the Senate in February, 1839, with a speech against abolitionism which defined an attitude sufficiently pro-slavery to receive some approval from Calhoun.¹²

But the example had already been set and the other leaders were not very slow in following. In December, 1837, the southern Whig members had taken part in the meeting which produced the Patton gag resolution and had assisted in the work of securing its passage in the House; a year later when the Whigs from the northern states unanimously opposed the Atherton gag resolutions, they were aided, in part intentionally, by the negative votes of four southern Whigs and the refusal of several others to cast their votes.¹³

In so far as the slavery question entered into the campaign of 1840, the Whigs were at a disadvantage on

¹⁰ C. M. Noland to Crittenden, Feb. 4, 1838, Crittenden MSS.

¹¹ See Preston's speech before the Democratic Whig Association in Philadelphia, *National Intelligencer*, March 13, 1839; Wm. C. Preston to H. M. Bowyer, Feb. 3, 1839, Preston MSS.

¹² *Calhoun Correspondence*, 424.

¹³ *House Journal*, 25 Cong., 3 sess., 56-71; *Niles' Register*, LV, 312. Several of these explained their votes on the ground that the resolutions did not go far enough to protect the South. Wise and Stanly later offered more "southern" resolutions. *House Journal*, 25 Cong., 3 sess., 167-168. On Jan. 28, 1840, when the gag was applied and inserted as the twenty-first rule, Bell, Gentry, and Underwood voted with the northern Whigs. *Id.*, 26 Cong., 1 sess., 241-243.

account of the record of the northern wing. The southern Democratic members of Congress, noting this opening, drew up an address to the people of the slave-holding states in which they reminded their constituents of the votes of the northern Whigs on the various resolutions that had come before Congress. They showed how the compact front of the South had been broken by the votes of the southern Whigs against the gag resolutions and predicted further results from the political coalition which had brought about the nomination of General Harrison.¹⁴ The success of the latter was followed by the very results that had been anticipated. As John Quincy Adams continued the struggle for the right of petition, he was steadily supported by a handful of Whigs from the border states of the South. In the special session of 1841 they held the balance of power and assisted in striking out the twenty-first rule of the House and in preventing a reconsideration of the vote which had accomplished this.¹⁵ In 1844, five of them shared in Adams's final triumph.¹⁶ Another instance of great significance, in which the sectional line yielded to that of party, came in the ratification of the nomination of Edward Everett as minister to England. After having entered into a secret understanding to reject him on account of his anti-slavery convictions, the southern Whig senators, placing duty and justice before their own honor, broke the pledge of secrecy and made ratification possible by their votes.¹⁷ Many southern Whigs

¹⁴ McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, VI, 579-580.

¹⁵ Five held firm on the vote to reconsider: Botts, Stuart, Kennedy, T. F. Marshall, and Underwood. *House Journal*, 27 Cong., 1 sess., 81-82. See Botts' and Stuart's cards to their constituents, *National Intelligencer*, June 9, 1841.

¹⁶ Clingman, Kennedy, Preston, Wethered, and White of Kentucky. *House Journal*, 28 Cong., 2 sess., 10-12.

¹⁷ Weed, *Autobiography*, I, 510; *Senate Journal*, 27 Cong., 1 sess., 267.

denounced the Democrats for eternally dragging the slavery question before the people to cover the real question at issue and to stir up agitation.¹⁸

With the renewed prominence of the Texas question in the presidential contest of 1844, the regular issues between the national parties were forced into the background and slavery came to the front to hold the stage for more than fifteen years. The possibility of an extension of the area of slavery had proved attractive to southern Whigs as well as Democrats when the question of Texas annexation was first raised. In 1837 and 1838 Senator Preston of South Carolina, who was prepared to make an issue with the North on the slavery question, championed the cause of annexation and fathered resolutions in its favor before the Senate. He found, however, that he could not unite the South upon the question.¹⁹ When, early in 1844, it was brought up again by Tyler's treaty, it was still a popular measure with most Whig voters in the South, and it was clear that, if it became a party question, it might force a certain amount of readjustment within the parties.²⁰ The Whig leaders, however, were inclined to oppose the project as one which might reflect credit upon Tyler and upon Calhoun who was now secretary of state.²¹

The excitement caused by the discussion of the annexation proposition forced upon Clay the necessity of placing himself on record with regard to it. He was then on his triumphal progress through the South and used the occasion to ascertain the strength of

¹⁸ Stovall, *Life of Toombs*, 47; *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, I, 379.

¹⁹ Wm. C. Preston to H. M. Bowyer, Jan. 11, 1839, Preston MSS.

²⁰ *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 90; Wilson Lumpkin to Cobb, April 4, 1844, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

²¹ B. W. Leigh to Mangum, March 28, 1844, Mangum MSS. Wm. C. Preston to Crittenden, May 4, June 5, 1844, Crittenden MSS.

annexation sentiment. His conclusion was that the anxiety there was much less than represented and he hoped, after consultation with the party leaders, to be able to define his position so as to reconcile all interests within the party.²² This he attempted in his famous "Raleigh letter" to the editors of the *National Intelligencer*—²³ a letter which was drawn up with entire confidence in the result and with the approval of Badger, Stanly, and Governor Morehead.²⁴ As he summarized his views, he considered the annexation of Texas, "at this time, without the assent of Mexico, as a measure compromising the national character, involving us certainly in war with Mexico, probably with other foreign powers, dangerous to the integrity of the Union, inexpedient in the present financial condition of the country, and not called for by any general expression of public opinion". Before publication this letter was submitted to several southern Whig members of Congress, who seemed to be satisfied with the position he took.²⁵

Clay did not entertain the slightest apprehension as to the results of the publication of his opinions. He felt perfectly sure that the degree of favor which prevailed at the South toward annexation was far less than it was believed to be. So he took his stand boldly. He knew that Van Buren was opposed to annexation and he felt that, as they would occupy common ground on

²² Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 217-218, Clay to Crittenden, March 24, 1844; Avery, *Recollections of A. H. Stephens*, 17.

²³ *National Intelligencer*, April 27, 1844.

²⁴ Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 219. Clay to Crittenden from Raleigh, April 17, 1844. Cf. A. W. Gay to Mangum, April 20, 1844, Mangum MSS.

²⁵ *Ibid.*; Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 179. Stephens wrote to his brother April 22, 1844, that Clay's letter was "very full, clear, and satisfactory".

this point, it was important that he should be the first to break silence.²⁶ His confidence would seem to be justified from the comment made by William C. Preston on the letter: "That is a wonderfully clever letter of Mr. Clay's. The arguments strong, well put and delivered with noble gravity. Certainly the question is shall we go to war for Texas? The public mind is not heated on the subject in this State nor can the newspapers inflame it."²⁷ The southern Whig senators, moreover, promptly adopted Clay's position and rallied to defeat Tyler's annexation treaty. When the vote was taken, June 8, 1844, every southern Whig, except Henderson of Mississippi, voted in the negative.²⁸

The effect of Clay's declaration was to quiet for the time the activity of Whig annexationists to whom it seemed probable that the letter-writing of the presidential candidates would remove the question of annexation from the issues of the campaign. Southern Whig journals accepted Clay's position but in many cases qualified it so as to make it clear that it was only existing obstacles, perhaps merely temporary ones, that rendered immediate annexation undesirable.²⁹ Clay "would have time for deliberation", announced the *Savannah Republican* in its comment on the Raleigh letter.³⁰ Many Whigs, however, regretting that Clay had not clearly left "a door open for annexation at a future time, and when present obstacles might be re-

²⁶ Clay to Crittenden from Norfolk, April 21, 1844, Crittenden MSS.

²⁷ Wm. C. Preston to Crittenden, May 4, 1844. In a letter of June 5 he urged the rejection of the Texas treaty "and when Clay is in and Mexico consents, the matter can be reviewed". Crittenden MSS.

²⁸ The vote was 16 ayes to 35 nays. *Senate Journal*, 28 Cong., 1 sess., Append., 438.

²⁹ *Raleigh Register*, May 3, 1844; *Raleigh Star*, May 1, 1844.

³⁰ *Savannah Republican*, May 1, 1844.

moved", were not satisfied with the assurances of the press that such was his intention.³¹ Clay attempted to repair the omission by more letter-writing and in July addressed two letters to persons in Alabama. In the first he disclaimed any personal objection to the annexation of Texas and in the other stated that he would be glad to see it annexed if it could be done without dishonor, without war, with the consent of the states and on fair and reasonable terms, accompanying this statement with the promise in the event of his election to judge the matter on its own merits.³²

Clay could not go far enough, however, to satisfy all sincere annexationists especially after the Democrats nominated Polk on a platform calling for the reannexation of Texas and began the campaign in the South upon this issue alone.³³ As a result many Whig votes in the South were lost. Such losses were especially large in Alabama where prominent Whigs went for Polk, among them Crabb, a former member of Congress who had for years been a leading Whig in his district.³⁴ In Kentucky, Thomas F. Marshall, the former Whig Congressman from Clay's own district, took ground in favor of annexation and became an active volunteer orator for Polk and Dallas.³⁵ To prevent a similar result in Georgia, the Whig convention there, after the publication of Clay's Raleigh letter, passed the resolutions of Alexander H. Stephens favorable to

³¹ S. F. Miller to Clay, June, 1844. Miller, *Bench and Bar of Georgia*, II, 386.

³² Clay to S. F. Miller, July 1, 1844, *Tuscaloosa Monitor*, July 17, 1844; Clay to T. M. Peters and J. M. Jackson, July 27, 1844, *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 439.

³³ E. H. Foster to Crittenden, July 13, 1844, Crittenden MSS.

³⁴ Garrett, *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama*, 53.

³⁵ *Washington Globe*, Sept. 12, 28, 1844.

future annexation.³⁶ Similarly in Virginia, James Lyons the Whig elector for the eastern district declared for Texas during the canvass.³⁷

On the whole, however, the position of Clay received the endorsement of the Whigs of the South. There was a general feeling among them that the passage of the treaty which Tyler had submitted to the Senate would be a breach of the national honor and good faith toward Mexico.³⁸ While it was a stock argument that the acquisition of Texas would add to the strength of the slave power, certain Whigs followed the reasoning of Waddy Thompson and opposed annexation on southern grounds, namely, that it would cause a migration to the new territory and would thereby ultimately endanger the slave interests in the old states by rendering slavery relatively unprofitable there.³⁹ It was a valuable campaign argument, too, in the South to represent the Democrats as trying to bring in Texas as a free state.⁴⁰ Many southern Whigs took a non-committal stand on Texas, stating that the success of the Whig cause was more important than any mere question of annexation.⁴¹ It was, moreover, hard for the Whigs of either section to support the policy of Tyler. He was, without doubt, more cordially hated by them than any of their opponents; they believed him to be entirely unscrupulous,

³⁶ Avery, *Recollections of A. H. Stephens*, 17. Cf. *Savannah Republican*, June 26; *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, June 25, 1844.

³⁷ *Globe*, July 25, 1844; Tyler, *Tylers*, II, 350.

³⁸ See Mangum to Brother, May 29, 1844, Mangum MSS.; Crittenden to C. Coleman, May 16, 1844, Crittenden MSS.

³⁹ Waddy Thompson to Gales and Seaton, *National Intelligencer*, July 6, 1844; *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 316-319. Cf. J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, XII, 68.

⁴⁰ *Miss. Hist. Soc., Publications*, IX, 194; *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 239; *Cong. Globe*, 28 Cong., 1 sess., 64.

⁴¹ *Memoir of S. S. Prentiss*, II, 315.

capable of any meanness and perfidy. There was a consensus of opinion that the annexation scheme was a ruse to divide and distract the Whig party in the South.⁴²

In this campaign the Whigs stood out distinctly as the champions of the Union. Even before Clay announced his position in regard to Texas, Botts and others had opposed annexation, impelled by the fear that it would lead to a dissolution of the union.⁴³ Then from the other side came the cry of "Texas or Disunion!" which was voiced in one form or another in many southern Democratic newspapers. The motive of desiring to dissolve the Union seemed to many to explain Calhoun's connection with the treaty.⁴⁴ The Whigs came promptly to the rescue. In answer to a proposal for a southern convention at Nashville, the Whigs of that city met and denounced the project as a treasonable plot. When Richmond was suggested as a proper place for such an assemblage, the Whigs gathered at the Clay Club and passed resolutions condemning this movement of the Polk party and protesting against their city being desecrated in this way.⁴⁵ The Clay Club of Charleston, which, according to the *Charleston Mercury*, regulated the Whig action of the whole state, in a circular addressed "To all who revere the Union—who hold fast to the constitution—who desire peace, rather than a civil war", reviewed the secession movement of the South Carolina Democrats

⁴² See A. H. Stephens to J. Thomas, May 17, 1844, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

⁴³ *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 91; *National Intelligencer*, April 4, 1844.

⁴⁴ Stephens to J. Thomas, May 17, 1844, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

⁴⁵ *Niles' Register*, LXVI, 403-406.

and promised to "continue to resist unwaveringly".⁴⁶ These efforts were applauded by the Whigs and their organs all over the South.⁴⁷ The rallying cry became "the Union without Texas rather than Texas without the Union"; the foundations were thus laid for the course which the party was to pursue in regard to such disunion movements in the future.

The "wolf cry of disunion", however, was unable to offset the disadvantage which the Whigs suffered from Clay's attitude toward annexation.⁴⁸ The election in November was close but it revealed that, despite very significant minorities in the southern states, the real strength of the Whig party lay in the North. Clay failed to secure the votes of any of the states of the lower South, while the majority in Tennessee was cut down to scarcely more than a hundred. Kentucky and North Carolina were the only safe Whig states whose interests were fully identified with those of the South. Preston wrote to Clay: "For the present the Whig party of the South is dispersed".⁴⁹

An analysis of the presidential vote of 1844 and a

⁴⁶ *Id.*, LXVII, 173. The North Carolina Whig Central Committee sent out a "confidential" circular to counteract the effort "to carry this State for Texas and disunion". *Washington Globe*, Oct. 28, 1844.

⁴⁷ *Savannah Republican*, July 6, 8, 19, 1844.

⁴⁸ Clay's friend, Leslie Combs, admitted that annexation was the rock upon which Clay's hopes were wrecked: "Seven free States and eight slave States went for it and you do not know how we were pressed in Tennessee and I tell you candidly that but for our great attachment to Henry Clay, we could not have saved Kentucky—*We cannot now sustain ourselves in opposition* to it. We opposed Tyler's treaty mainly because of its secrecy and the people's ignorance of its negotiation. But the people have been appealed to and have elected a mere *Tom Tit* over the old Eagle. It is true, fraud, falsehood, and foreigners all helped, but here is the naked fact staring us in the face—Our strongest man has been beaten by a mere John Doe." Combs to Clayton, Nov. 20, 1844, Clayton MSS.

⁴⁹ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 503.

comparison with the returns of 1840 show that there was an actual numerical decrease in the Whig vote in the black belt of every state crossed by that belt, with the exception of Maryland, Virginia, and Louisiana. This decrease varied from less than one per cent. in Alabama to twelve per cent. in Mississippi. This is explained by the unpopularity there of the party's stand on annexation. But Whig losses and Democratic gains in the southern states cannot entirely be accounted for as the result of the annexation issue. For, although the Democratic party profited by these Whig losses in the planting districts, still the largest Democratic gains were made in the regions where negro slaves were in a minority. The percentage of Democratic gain in those regions was double that in the black belt except in the case of North Carolina. The Whigs, on the other hand, made very slight gains there, and in Alabama and North Carolina they suffered losses in the neighborhood of ten per cent. This shows that the Whigs had a two-fold disadvantage in the South compared with their position in 1840. The Texas issue cut down their majorities in the black belt on the one hand and, on the other, they had nothing to correspond to the "Log Cabin and Hard Cider" appeal to the Democratic back country which Harrison's candidature made in 1840.⁵⁰

The Democrats in Congress immediately prepared to reap the fruits of their victory by taking up the annexation project. This forced the southern Whig members to face the necessity of deciding whether to follow their sectional interests reenforced by the recent popular verdict in favor of Texas, or to follow the dictation of party against it. As it turned out, the party line gave

⁵⁰ Consult the maps plotting these returns, in appendix.

way just enough to allow the measure to be accomplished.

In the House, Clingman, citing the charges of Democratic fraud, denied that the people had decided for Texas in the election.⁵¹ A group of eight southern Whigs, however, rallied about the plan of annexation by joint resolution, as the only plan which they could support. This method was first agreed upon by Stephens and Milton Brown of Tennessee and the latter presented such a resolution in the House. It was eventually carried in that body with the assistance of these eight members, who were Brown, Peyton, Senter, and Ashe of Tennessee, Stephens and Clinch of Georgia, Dellet of Alabama, and Newton of Virginia.⁵² Before the vote was taken Kenneth Rayner, of North Carolina, complained that under the management of the chairman none of the southern Whigs who were opposed to the annexation scheme had been allowed to explain the grounds of their opposition.⁵³ He had previously explained that his own efforts against the joint resolution were the result of his belief in the unconstitutionality of resorting to that form of annexation.⁵⁴ In the Senate, Foster of Tennessee presented the joint resolution simultaneously with its introduction in the other body but refused to support it when amended so as to permit Tyler to secure annexation by treaty if he preferred.⁵⁵

⁵¹ *Niles' Register*, LXVII, 328-333.

⁵² *Cong. Globe*, 28 Cong., 2 sess., 194; cf. Stephens to Colonel R. S. Burch, June 15, 1854, *Am. Hist. Rev.*, VIII, 9-10. The position of some of them was not sustained by their Whig constituents. Toombs wrote Stephens, Feb. 16, 1845, that he had never found himself differing with him on so many points. *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

⁵³ *Cong. Globe*, 28 Cong., 2 sess., 191; J. Q. Adams, *Memoirs*, XII, 153.

⁵⁴ *Cong. Globe*, 28 Cong., 2 sess., Append., 410-411.

⁵⁵ *Cong. Globe*, 28 Cong., 2 sess., 127, 362.

The general body of Whig senators voted against the measure; they denied its constitutionality because it failed to recognize the control of their own body over the treaty-making power. Barrow of Louisiana, however, stated his opposition to any scheme of annexation as highly detrimental to the whole South and peculiarly destructive to the interests of his own state.⁵⁶ Rives of Virginia, who was not averse to annexation when it could be brought about fairly, honorably, and constitutionally, admitted that its effects on the slave-holding interests of his own state would be disastrous, but refused to have that considered as the explanation of his own vote in the negative.⁵⁷ Berrien and Archer also argued against the expediency of annexation because it would be disastrous for the South.⁵⁸ Three Whig senators, Merrick of Maryland, Henderson of Mississippi, and Johnson of Louisiana, voted with the Democrats on the final ballot, thus enabling the passage of the measure by a vote of twenty-seven to twenty-five.

The outbreak of the Mexican war fulfilled the predictions of those Whigs who had refused to support annexation because they wished to avoid a dishonorable war.⁵⁹ Their opposition to the course of the executive was largely placed on that basis. Whig annexationists,

⁵⁶ *Cong. Globe*, 28 Cong., 2 sess., Append., 392. The Whig legislature of Louisiana, however, had passed resolutions in favor of annexation which were presented in the Senate by Barrow's colleague, Senator Johnson. The latter, though a Whig, advocated annexation. *Senate Journal*, 28 Cong., 2 sess., 127; *Niles' Register*, LXVII, 346, 371.

⁵⁷ *Cong. Globe*, 28 Cong., 2 sess., Append., 382. Cf. C. V. B. Evans to Mangum, Feb. 24, 1845, Mangum MSS.

⁵⁸ *Cong. Globe*, 28 Cong., 2 sess., 393, Append., 329, 383.

⁵⁹ Cf. John M. Botts to Mangum, Jan. 13, 1846: "Why dont the Whig party thunder out against the war! . . . Let them throw down the responsibility of the war (*which is coming sure*) on the authors of it, etc." Mangum MSS.

however, like Stephens and Brown in the House, charged that the war was unnecessary and unjustifiable; they condemned it as a war which aimed solely at conquest. Even the lay members of the party soon began to lose the enthusiasm which a successful war, giving promise of desirable acquisitions of territory, usually arouses. They then demanded that the war be terminated at the earliest possible occasion.⁶⁰

Meanwhile, the anti-slavery forces in Congress, divining Polk's intention to extend our territory at the expense of Mexico, hit upon the Wilmot proviso to effect the exclusion of slavery from any new acquisition. The sectional line became more pronounced than ever. Southern Whigs united solidly with southern Democrats to block the measure but it was due to "northern men with southern principles" that they were eventually successful. All this was to have its influence on the situation within the parties. The northern Whig members had clearly shown their anti-slavery character; it was henceforth a factor to be reckoned with in the problem of maintaining party harmony.

The easiest solution under the circumstances was to avoid the issue. This the southern Whigs attempted to do by proclaiming their hostility to the acquisition of territory as a result of the war. In the House they had rallied around the resolutions of Stephens of Georgia, repudiating any idea of the dismemberment of Mexico and the acquisition of any of her territory, while in the Senate they supported the amendment of Berrien to the same purport. Pointing to the signs in the North of the impending conflict, they called upon

⁶⁰ J. B. Lamar to Cobb, June 24, 1846, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*; J. Cameron to Mangum, Feb. 1, 1847, Mangum MSS.

their fellow southerners to secure themselves and their institution, and appealed to national patriotism to exclude this direful question from the nation's councils.⁶¹ This remedy was one in which the northern members could cooperate—one, in fact, which they almost demanded as a compromise arrangement, knowing that it would exclude territory which seemed almost certain to come in open to slavery.⁶² Clay from his retirement forged the connecting link between the sections of the party when, at the close of his Lexington speech on the Mexican war, he introduced resolutions disavowing "any wish or desire on our part to acquire any foreign territory for the purpose of propagating slavery, or of introducing slaves from the United States into such foreign territory".⁶³

To what extent the southern Whigs were willing to stand on this ground in connection with their local activity is evident from the following report by a Democratic leader on the situation in the Georgia

⁶¹ *Cong. Globe*, 29 Cong., 2 sess., 228-229, 330, 354, 357, 556. Ex-Senator Wm. C. Rives of Virginia was unwilling that there should be any territorial acquisition south of 36° 30'. He thought that "the reasonable demands of the slave-holding regions" could be satisfied by securing "a recognition of the Rio Grande for the western boundary of Texas". Rives to Crittenden, Feb. 5, 8, 1847, Crittenden MSS. Senator Archer of Virginia occupied the same ground. Polk, *Diary*, II, 115.

⁶² The editor of the Cincinnati *Atlas* wrote to Crittenden, Sept. 7, 1847: "They [the northern Whigs] offer you a ground of just compromise, national, conservative, right and proper in itself, which, to save the Union and the Republic, ought to be adopted even if the agitation of the slavery question did not threaten the peace of the Union. That ground is *no territory at all*. We do not *need* another foot; and we can get none, either by conquest or purchase, but must come with the terrific slavery agitation." Crittenden MSS.

⁶³ *National Intelligencer*, Nov. 25, 1847.

William C. Preston of South Carolina warmly commended the stand taken in the Lexington speech, a "State paper" which he thought would do much to "arrest the fatal policy which is hurrying us to the most disastrous consequences". Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 550.

legislature, a state in which both parties were keen on southern rights:

After a four days discussion in the Senate, on the Wilmot Proviso, and the war and the acquisition of Territory, the vote was taken last night. The Whigs took high ground against the war and denounced it as infamous and iniquitous. They also went against any further acquisition of Territory, occupying pretty much the position of Mr. Clay in his Lexington speech. You will see that a resolution was introduced declaring that the people of Georgia will adhere to the Missouri Compromise line, in the division of Territory that may hereafter be acquired by the General Government. It was lost by a vote of 20 to 26. Of the twenty who voted for it, 18 are D. and 2 Whigs; of those who voted against it 21 are Whigs and 5 Democrats. I think the Democrats who voted against it, were the vote to be taken over, would record their votes in favor of it. As for the Whigs, they are right in a political point of view, in opposing it, if they desire to preserve the unity of the party North and South.⁶⁴

Even General Taylor announced, after Mexico had been placed completely at the mercy of his troops and of the other American armies, that he was unutterably opposed to the acquisition of any territory south of 36° 30', which might endanger the permanence of the Union by fomenting a sectional controversy.⁶⁵

The Whig platform of opposition to the annexation of Mexican territory was accepted and made the foundation for the defence of southern rights. While the southern Democrats kept demanding more territory as an outlet for the surplus slave population of the near future and made glowing representations of the "manifest destiny" of our nation, their rivals gave answer to

⁶⁴ L. J. Glenn to Cobb, Dec. 1, 1847, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

⁶⁵ Taylor to Crittenden, Jan. 3, Feb. 13, Crittenden MSS. Taylor to Clayton, Sept. 4, 1848, Clayton MSS.

them and to the North that they wanted no more territory, that they preferred the status quo rather than the extension of the slave area at the expense of a rupture with the North.⁶⁶ "Like the Trojan horse", said the Richmond *Whig*, "this fatal gift of Mexican territory is fraught with danger and death; like the unwary Trojans let us not break down the walls and admit it into the citadel."⁶⁷ The northern Democracy, Berrien told his constituents, were determined to engraft the Wilmot proviso upon all measures for acquiring territory; would southern men consent to acquire this territory won by their common sufferings, blood, and treasure with slavery excluded from it?⁶⁸ "The truth is", said Botts of Virginia, when canvassing for his reelection, "that this proviso, although of Democratic origin was *adopted* by the Whig party of the North, for the purpose of furnishing a motive and an object to the South to put an end to this unbridled lust for acquisition, which, if not arrested, must put an end to all our institutions, sooner or later."⁶⁹ Furthermore, Waddy Thompson, the late minister to Mexico, better informed, perhaps, than any one in the country concerning the situation on the Mexican borders, had just asserted as the basis of his opposition, that conditions of soil and climate would make slavery an impossibility in the coveted regions.⁷⁰ This of course in the minds of many removed the strongest attraction for territorial indem-

⁶⁶ See editorials cited in *National Intelligencer*, June 3, Nov. 4, Dec. 13, 1847.

⁶⁷ *Niles' Register*, LXXIII, 47.

⁶⁸ Speech at Dahlonoga, Ga., *ibid.*, 125.

⁶⁹ Letter in *Am. Whig Rev.*, VI, 509.

⁷⁰ Speech at Greenville, S. C., *National Intelligencer*, Oct. 21.

nity.⁷¹ It was noted that, if true, this also reduced the Wilmot proviso to a mere abstraction, none the less insulting, but one which could be avoided at the same time that the South was saved from being surrounded by a cordon of free states.

The rank and file of the Whig party in the South, however, were becoming more and more distrustful of the northern wing. They protested against the unanimity with which the northern members had supported the slavery restriction proviso;⁷² the Georgia Whigs, in convention assembled, denied its constitutionality and that of any other legislation by Congress restricting the right to hold slave property in the territories; and many expressed their determination to resist its passage even to a dissolution of the Union.⁷³ The nearness of the presidential election, however, tended to make them restrain the violence of their utterances.

When Congress convened in the winter of 1847, several southern Whig members were for a time in doubt as to whether or not they should support Winthrop of Massachusetts, the favorite Whig candidate for the speakership, against whom the taint of abolition had repeatedly been charged. In throwing in their lot with his supporters and aiding in his election they exposed themselves to the charge of unsoundness to southern interests.⁷⁴ Cabell of Florida refuted such assertions by calling attention to what was in reality the mainstay of the Whig party when the slavery question

⁷¹ *Mobile Advertiser*, Oct. 15, 1847; *Savannah Republican*, Jan. 15, 1848.

⁷² *Raleigh Register*, Feb. 28, 1847.

⁷³ *Mobile Advertiser*, Oct. 15, 1847.

⁷⁴ Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 219, 220; cf. *Calhoun Correspondence*, 1148.

became the dominant feature of national politics: "The Whig party, North and South, is characterized by a spirit of conservatism. It embraces in its comprehensive view the *whole country*. It is not influenced by a narrow, contracted sectional policy."⁷⁵ As a result of the confidence in this belief, desertions from the party were limited in number though the compactness of the party organization was gone.

With the certainty that peace with Mexico would bring territorial indemnity, southern Whigs proceeded to give evidence of their soundness on slavery in their efforts for a settlement of the question. Most of them would have been satisfied merely to have avoided a direct issue on the abstract question of the Wilmot proviso. Some of the hot-spurs, however, coupled threats of dissolution at the passage of the proviso, with the demand that the extension of the Missouri Compromise line should be agreed upon by mutual concession; while on the opposite extreme a significant minority had privately made up their minds to acquiesce in the result if the slavery restriction should succeed in passing both houses and receive the signature of the president.⁷⁶ In the meantime the treaty

⁷⁵ Cabell to editors of *National Intelligencer*, Jan. 13, 1848. The strongest argument on this point came from a Calhoun man in Alabama: "The connexion of the Whig party with the abolitionists has never disturbed me a great deal for the reason that the Whig party is *governed* by its leading and reflecting men. The tone of the party is derived from men of property and character and they are in a measure held to respect property guaranteed by the constitution and laws of the country. The union of the democratic party with the abolitionists I have regarded as far more dangerous because they are held by few restraints and are ready to go farther lengths to carry their ends." J. A. Campbell to Calhoun, Nov. 20, 1847, *Calhoun Correspondence*, 1141; cf. *Am. Whig Rev.*, IX, 221.

⁷⁶ *Am. Whig Rev.*, VIII, 340; *New Orleans Bee*, May 31, 1849; cf. *Calhoun Correspondence*, 1147.

with Mexico was signed and ratified. It secured for the United States extensive territories but left the status of slavery there undetermined, and southern Whigs, after severe condemnation of the terms,⁷⁷ prepared to cooperate with the Democrats from their own section to secure a satisfactory settlement.

A compromise committee in the Senate headed by Clayton of Delaware reported a bill providing territorial governments for Oregon, New Mexico, and California, which left the whole question of slavery to the "tranquil operation of the Constitution" as interpreted by the Supreme Court. While the measure passed the Senate with the cooperation of most of the southern Whig members, the debate there showed that the greatest diversity existed as to the interpretation of the measure. It was felt to be a failure as a compromise in that it made no definite concession to either side, but rather postponed the settlement to a later occasion.⁷⁸ In the House the proposition was shelved, partly as a result of the efforts of Stephens and a group of southern Whigs who accepted the interpretation that the courts could only recognize the continuance of the Mexican law which prohibited slavery there; they would agree to no such adjustment.⁷⁹ We are told that the northern Whigs repeatedly urged their southern colleagues to aid in defeating the Clayton compromise as one from which the Democrats might manufacture political capital in

⁷⁷ Polk's message had given the impression that he desired to obtain all of Mexico; the treaty then was the choice of evils. The cotton growers and the commercial interests, moreover, anxiously awaited the healthful results of returning peace. See *New Orleans Bulletin*, March 14, 1848.

⁷⁸ *New Orleans Bulletin*, Aug. 7, 9, 1848; *Savannah Republican*, Aug. 3, 1848; *Richmond Whig*, in *Niles' Register*, LXXIV, 107-108.

⁷⁹ Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 229-232.

the presidential election, and promised in return a more liberal settlement later.⁸⁰ When a separate bill for Oregon was pushed through and received the president's signature, he was severely criticized by southern Whigs for his betrayal of the South in accepting, though under protest, the prohibition of slavery in the newly organized territory.

By this time the presidential campaign was going on in full swing and the candidates were already in the field. Clay, the logical standard-bearer of the Whig party, had little claim to availability at this time; many Whigs showed a positive and settled disinclination to support him in another contest. Southern Whigs who had assisted in or supported the annexation of Texas recalled the stand which he had taken in the Raleigh letter; northern Whigs still resented his effort to qualify his position in supplementary letters giving a southern point of view. To run Clay under the circumstances seemed to be to hazard the defeat of the Whig party. Before the middle of 1847, a number of the party leaders in Kentucky, Clay's home state, virtually gave up all serious consideration of his claims; by the end of the year this was true of the great majority of them and the Taylor sentiment in that state was overwhelming.⁸¹ Taylor's popularity, however, after the early battles of the Mexican war, made presidential timber out of the plain frontier general who at first refused to take seriously the movement for his candidacy.

Whig leaders in the South, taking advantage of the

⁸⁰ *Speeches and Writings of T. L. Clingman*, 230.

⁸¹ G. W. Williams to Crittenden, Jan. 7; T. B. Stevenson to R. P. Letcher, June 20, 1847, etc., Crittenden MSS. Cf. Clay to Crittenden, Sept. 26, 1847, *ibid*,

popular feeling there, proceeded to direct it so as to secure Taylor's nomination by the national convention.⁸² An active group of Taylor men in the House of Representatives, including Stephens and Toombs of Georgia, Goggin, Preston, and Flournoy of Virginia, Hilliard of Alabama; and a few northerners including Truman Smith of Connecticut and Lincoln of Illinois, together with Senator Crittenden, Clay's life-long friend, upheld the general's cause at the capitol.⁸³

The selection of Taylor by the southern members of this group was influenced by other considerations besides his peculiar availability. This movement was a southern insurgent movement which, if successful, meant that Clay, the great leader of the national party, would be discarded and with him the principles of party leadership for which he stood. Clay was above all others a national Whig; he stood at all times for party harmony and for a settlement of all sectional differences by compromise. He was, moreover, the one person to whom was conceded the undisputed right of defining party orthodoxy. Taylor, on the other hand, had no real political interests or beliefs; party lines had thus far concerned him but little and, in view of the non-partisan demand for his candidacy, could hardly be expected to confine him closely at any time in the near future. As a southerner and a slave-holder, too, it was to be expected that he would be an uncompro-

⁸² Ex-Governor Crawford of Georgia was one of the first advocates of Taylor in his state. *Savannah Republican*, March 10, 1848. Ex-Senator Archer of Virginia at an early date staked all faith on Taylor. T. B. Stevenson to R. P. Letcher, April 23, 1847; Archer to Crittenden, Sept. 22, 1847, Crittenden MSS.

⁸³ Avery, *Recollections of A. H. Stephens*, 21-22; Sargent, *Public Men and Events*, II, 354.

mising champion of the interests of his section in the controversy that was coming to a head, regardless of any views which the northern members of his party might hold or urge upon him.

Toombs and Stephens and the southern Whigs of their type realized clearly the meaning and the consequences of the growing anti-slavery character of the northern section of their party. They sought, therefore, to safeguard the interests of their section by electing to the presidency a southerner who, they believed, could be relied upon to check the progress of the anti-slavery movement, if necessary, by the exercise of the veto power. Fortune, it seemed, brought forward General Taylor just at the critical moment. So the struggle within the party between the forces of sectionalism and the principle of nationalism was begun. In the heat of the contest, southern Whig leaders came to believe even that Clay had "sold himself body and soul to the Northern Anti-slavery Whigs",⁸⁴ and avowed their determination not to vote for him even if he secured the nomination.

Clay, on the other hand, was not without loyal supporters in the South, Berrien of Georgia, Morehead of North Carolina, Langdon of Alabama, and Botts of Virginia being among the most prominent of them. Many of the Clay following refused to give up their candidate in any contingency. The contest was to be fought out in the national convention at Philadelphia on the seventh of June, although Taylor, true to his distrust of the convention system, had months before made

⁸⁴ Toombs to James Thomas, April 16, 1848, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

known his fixed purpose not to withdraw from the canvass even if he failed to secure the nomination.⁸⁵

The Whigs of nearly all the southern states had before the meeting of the convention expressed their preferences for Taylor. He was looked upon as peculiarly a southern candidate, "a southern man with national principles".⁸⁶ Even the Calhoun faction in the South was for a time ready to surrender the claims of its leader and to rally to the support of Taylor in order to "enable the Country to relieve itself of the conjoint and infamous burdens of Hunkerism and abolitionism".⁸⁷ "We might as well make up our minds that Mr. Clay cannot be our candidate", wrote a northern Whig leader. "Consider that point settled. I assure you that southern Whigs with scarcely an exception, are for General Taylor. He will be a candidate with or without a nomination."⁸⁸ Many northerners, therefore, having seen Clay pronounced *hors de combat*, listened with favor to the plea of availability and came to prefer Taylor's nomination. On the other hand, the idea of submitting Taylor's name to the national convention was urged by the southern leaders by reason of the advantage it would give in rallying around the general the Whig votes of the northern states.

During the balloting for the presidential nomination at Philadelphia, not a single southern vote was cast for a northern man. The first ballot showed the southern delegates divided between Clay and Taylor, with four-

⁸⁵ Taylor to Crittenden, Jan. 3, Feb. 13, March 25; Crittenden to Clay, May 4, 1848, Crittenden MSS.

⁸⁶ *Savannah Republican*, April 18.

⁸⁷ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 1118.

⁸⁸ Washington Hunt to Thurlow Weed, Jan. 1, 1848, *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, 165.

fifths of them lined up for the latter. On the fourth and final ballot only five of them cast their votes for Clay.⁸⁹ Taylor's triumph in the convention was a southern Whig triumph. It was complete enough to ensure his success in the campaign, especially after a satisfactory platform was drafted for him in the second Allison letter.⁹⁰ The Whig cause was somewhat weakened, however, by the inactivity, indifference, and even open opposition of many disaffected Clay Whigs who, unreconciled to the defeat of their leader and to the nomination of Taylor, were to be found in considerable numbers in almost every southern state.⁹¹

As an independent candidate, Taylor had attracted favorable notice from many southern Democrats and especially from the Calhoun contingent. Even as the Whig nominee, he continued to receive the support of many of these people;⁹² for the soundness of Cass, the Democratic candidate, was in reality a matter of con-

⁸⁹ See proceedings in *Niles' Register*, LXXIV, 349, 354-358.

⁹⁰ Taylor to Capt. J. S. Allison, Sept. 4, 1848, *Niles' Register*, LXXIV, 200-201; Thurlow Weed, *Autobiography*, 580-582. This letter was drafted by Crittenden after consultation with Stephens and Toombs. Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 294; Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 227-228. The letter, in which Taylor was described as a Whig, "decided, but not ultra" in his devotion to Whig principles, was the final concession granted by the southern friends of Taylor to the natural desire of northern Whigs that Taylor place himself unequivocally on Whig ground. Truman Smith wrote to Crittenden, Sept. 23, 1848: "The 2d Allison letter has cleared away many if not most of the difficulties with which we have to struggle in the free States. . . . General Taylor now stands before the country exactly where he should have placed himself last Jan'y and this would have saved us from a multitude of troubles to say nothing of possible defeat." Crittenden MSS.

⁹¹ Toombs to Crittenden, Sept. 27; M. P. Gentry to Crittenden, Nov. 20, etc., Crittenden MSS. N. Dimock to Mangum, Oct. 23, 1848, Mangum MSS.

⁹² Waddy Thompson to Crittenden, Sept. 8; J. E. Holmes to Crittenden, Sept. 24; Toombs to Crittenden, Sept. 27, 1848, Crittenden MSS.; S. Knipley to Clayton, Feb. 16, 1849, Clayton MSS.

siderable doubt to many of his party in the South, rather on account of than despite his doctrine of popular sovereignty as enunciated in the Nicholson letter.⁹³ They were told, moreover, that the old issues were of little consequence compared with the question of slavery in the territories, which had brought about the present crisis. They were offered the choice between a southern slave-holder and a northern opponent of slavery with the declaration of Calhoun still ringing in their ears that he would "prefer the election of *any respectable southern planter* whatever to any man of *northern birth and residence*".⁹⁴

Fillmore, the Whig candidate for the vice-presidency, proved to be a dead weight upon Taylor in the South. The Democrats did not fail to point out that the confinement in the White House might prove as fatal to Taylor, after his many years in the field, as it had been to Harrison and that his election might result in placing Fillmore, a northerner, in the presidential chair.⁹⁵ Fillmore's record on the Atherton resolutions was dug up and a great ado made over a letter he had written in 1838 to the abolitionists.⁹⁶ This threatened for a time to undo all the work of the Whigs in proving the guaranty which the institution of slavery would have in the person of Taylor. The charges against Fillmore, however, were laughed down as a matter of little consequence.⁹⁷

The character of the campaign conducted by the

⁹³ See *Montgomery Advertiser*, June 21; *National Intelligencer*, July 15, 30, Aug. 18, 1848.

⁹⁴ Foote, *War of the Rebellion*, 90.

⁹⁵ *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Append., 371.

⁹⁶ *Savannah Republican*, July 6, 7; cf. Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb *Correspondence*.

⁹⁷ Stovall, *Life of Toombs*, 150.

Whigs in the South is evident from the following description of their methods by an opponent:

Their speeches consist of three parts—miscellaneous abuse of Cass and the Democrats, comments on the danger to slavery, and the impossibility of trusting any Northern man, exemplified by the course of Van Buren—and lastly a glorification of Old Taylor's battles. I have never heard one of them advance a principle—save only that Congress ought to decide all questions, as per Allison letter—curious principle for the people in *primary assemblies*, is it not? They refuse to acknowledge that they are for any of the old Whig measures—won't tell what they are for, and go it blind for Taylor as a slaveholder and a hero—this is a fair and candid statement of their course. The hardest work that we have, is to meet the prejudice against all Northern men, which they foment so artfully by taunting us with Van Buren. . . .

One great advantage the Whigs have in argument is that they have no common platform. We are compelled to take a moderate compromise ground because our party must be satisfied in all sections, while they, in the South, take the most ultra Southern ground and abuse us as traitors to the South for not going so far as they do, and in the North vice versa. They don't care a fig what you prove on them about their Northern allies. They don't profess to think alike—and they will give up the Northern Whigs freely (except Fillmore) if they can involve the Northern Democrats in the same odium.⁹⁸

The earnestness of the campaign was leavened by the enthusiasm which was aroused by dwelling upon the military career of the hero of the Mexican war. The narration of a new anecdote about "old Zack" was far more effective than any serious argument for, or representation of, Whig party principles could have been. The large Taylor mass meetings and barbecues

⁹⁸ W. H. Hull to Cobb, July 22, 1848, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

which were held gave evidence of the trend of public opinion. Election day placed Georgia, Florida, and Louisiana in the Whig column and brought increased majorities in the regular Whig states of Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Maryland.⁹⁹

The keenest contemporary analysis of the presidential vote in the South was that made by the Democratic organ at New Orleans in commenting on the defeat of the cause which it was championing:

It is in fact the parishes in Louisiana which hold the largest number of slaves that have voted the Whig ticket with the greatest zeal and unanimity. From St. Barnard up to the East Baton Rouge, on both sides of the river, with the sugar region of Lafourche, Attakapas, and St. Landry—wherever owners of the richest plantations and the largest number of slaves are to be found.

The same phenomenon occurs in other states—in Alabama, in Mississippi, in Georgia—throughout the whole South, the most strenuous partisans of Taylor and Fillmore have been the richest planters and owners of slaves—with the exception of South Carolina—and even in Charleston, Holmes, the great nullifier, who refused to pay duties on a cargo of sugar, was in favor of Taylor, although he could not swallow Fillmore, and was elected to Congress in opposition to a Democrat who was friendly to Cass and Butler. It is a known fact that in the South those who are not owners of slaves are generally Democrats—at least the Democratic party of the South is composed in a great measure of that description of persons. It is a curious condition of affairs at any rate.¹⁰⁰

This analysis shows the strength of the Whig party in the black belt. In that belt, however, the actual Whig increase over the vote in 1844 was very slight—a mere

⁹⁹ Virginia was lost by nearly 1,500 votes probably because of the defection of the Clay men. Cf. Wm. C. Rives to Crittenden, Nov. 25, 1848, Crittenden MSS.

¹⁰⁰ *Louisiana Courier*, as quoted in *New Orleans Bulletin*, Oct. 31, 1849; Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, Sept. 2, 1850.

fraction of the gains made in those counties where slaves were in a minority and slave-keeping unprofitable. Taylor seems to have had considerable success in rallying around him in the back country the old "Tippecanoe" following of 1840.¹⁰¹

It was a glorious Whig victory, but a victory which endangered the existence of the national Whig party. Taylor had been supported in the South because he had stood upon non-partisan and upon southern ground. There was little wonder that his supporters were soon denouncing "the old Hunker Whig politicians and the stale, chronic, and unpopular doctrines of *ultra* Whiggery";¹⁰² but it was not to be expected that Taylor, as president, would take such a stand on the slavery question as to drive those southerners who had been most enthusiastic over his nomination and election into complete opposition to him. This, however, is exactly what happened. Nevertheless, even if the southern Whigs had badly miscalculated in supporting Taylor as the southern candidate, the result of their efforts was the same as if things had turned out as they had expected. For they had demanded and in part secured an alignment on the slavery issue; in this sense the election of 1848 was the entering wedge that was destined to split the national party into two sections. The election left its traces, also, in a similar line of division within the party in the southern states.

¹⁰¹ See maps, in appendix.

¹⁰² A. T. Burnley to Crittenden, July 22, 1849, Crittenden MSS. Burnley continued: "Who, for instance, can *wisely* contend, in the present state of public feeling, for a Bank of the U. S.—for a high protective Tariff—for a splendid system of internal improvements—for a distribution of the proceeds of the public lands etc., etc., etc.? The *people* don't want these things, and they have a right *not* to have them." Burnley had a personal interest in and connection with the *Washington Republic*, the new Whig organ which was just being established to represent the views of the Taylor administration.

CHAPTER V.

THE SOUTHERN MOVEMENT AND THE COMPROMISE, 1848-1850.

During the stir of the presidential campaign the slavery question was agitated in the South apart from any direct connection with party politics. It was believed by a considerable element there that there was need of paying special attention to the defense of southern rights; many persons calmly and seriously calculated the value of the Union in the face of the continued attacks upon southern institutions. They emphasized the vital importance of prompt, decided, and efficient action, urged the union of their section by the concerted efforts of the leaders of both parties, and quietly tested the strength of opinion in favor of joint action by all the slave states in the form of a southern convention. The fire-eaters or "chivalry" politicians, as they were sometimes called, talked of forcible resistance and counted the resources of the southern states and the possibilities of success. Calhoun's slavery resolutions in the Senate and the Virginia resolutions of 1847 had given them satisfactory ground to stand upon; and, even while the Clayton compromise was before Congress, they tried to rally the southern members in favor of a convention to insist upon a proper recognition of their rights.¹ When a territorial bill passed providing for the prohibition of slavery in Oregon, this movement became still more

¹ *Speeches and Writings of T. L. Clingman*, 229.

popular; an address calling for a meeting of southern members to protest against the action of Congress was circulated, but it failed to receive sufficient endorsement to warrant such action.² During the canvass there was also much talk of running an independent candidate to offset the nomination of Van Buren in the North and to break down the force of party lines in the South.³

While the Whigs repelled all insinuations that they were untrue to southern rights or even less zealous in their defense than the Democrats, they had thus far kept free from connection with the extreme remedies that had been suggested. They represented, indeed, the conservative element in their section; their recent training had been in the nationalistic school where they had learned to sacrifice many local interests in order to secure greater advantages for the whole country. "The particular local considerations", said a southern Whig, "which color the opinions of members of the party, in various sections of the Union, ought not to interfere with the great national measures which we are endeavoring to carry out, nor with the confidence due to each other."⁴ Amid "differences of opinion as to the good and evil of Southern institutions, there is but one opinion as to the paramount importance of the Union. On this first point of policy the Whigs of all the States are essentially and profoundly conservative".⁵

² New Orleans *Bulletin*, Sept. 7, 1848; see Bocock's speech of Feb. 26, 1849, *Cong. Globe*, 30 Cong., 2 sess., Appendix, 181; *Speeches and Writings of T. L. Clingman*, 229.

³ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 751, 1176, 1177.

⁴ "The Union of the Whigs of the whole Union. By a southern Whig", in *Am. Whig Rev.*, VI, 515. The anonymous author was Judge B. F. Porter, an Alabama Whig leader of state rights antecedents. Garrett, *Reminiscences of Public Men in Alabama*, 317.

⁵ *Am. Whig Rev.*, IX, 221.

Prior to the election of 1848 many Whigs of the South had, for the sake of unity and harmony, "deemed it their party interest to preserve a calm quiet silence" on the matter of the Wilmot proviso.⁶ In general, however, the southern Whigs were not only opposed to its enactment but they disbelieved in the constitutionality of any legislation by Congress on the subject of slavery in the territories. The Democratic press, on the other hand, soon circulated charges that tens of thousands of Whigs in the slave states believed that the proviso had a constitutional basis.⁷ However unwarranted these charges may have been when applied to those of the lower South, they were not without a foundation when applied to the Whigs of Kentucky and the border states where prominent leaders openly assumed that position, though ready to oppose the slavery restriction with their votes.⁸ Leading Whig jurists, moreover, as Senators Bell, Badger, and Underwood, were known to uphold its constitutionality, all having come out in speeches to that effect in Congress in the summer of 1848.⁹ In private other south-

⁶ *Calhoun Correspondence*, 1136.

⁷ *Augusta Constitutionalist*, Aug. 1, 11, 14, in *Savannah Republican*, Sept. 11, 1849.

⁸ *Louisville Journal*, July 21, 1849; *Niles' Register*, LXXV, 89, 131, 172. Edward Bates and many other slaveholders in Missouri claimed that Congress had plenary powers of legislation over slavery in the territories, on the principle of the Missouri Compromise. S. T. Glover to Crittenden, Dec. 19, 1848, Crittenden MSS.

⁹ *Cf.* *Washington Union*, Nov. 9, 1849; *Cong. Globe*, 30 Cong., 1 sess., 1001, 1074-1075, and Append., 695, 696, 701, 1165. Badger announced his position on June 2 and on the following day Underwood stated: "It is said that there is a constitutional prohibition to the passage of a law prohibiting slavery in a Territory, but I am inclined to think that there is none. I am moreover inclined to the opinion that slavery cannot exist in a Territory without the positive sanction of a law tolerating it." Kenneth Rayner and other Whig members of the North Carolina legislature were unwilling to deny the constitutionality of the congressional prohibition of slavery in the new territories. *Washington Union*, Jan. 17, 1849.

ern Whigs conceded the jurisdiction of Congress over slavery in the territories.¹⁰ Clay even admitted to his correspondents that the South ought "magnanimously to assent" to the exclusion of slavery from the new territories.¹¹

The Whig victory of 1848 gave the southern ultras little occasion for hope. Nothing definite was known of Taylor's position on the slavery question but even those southerners who were closest to the sources of information had their fears. They found themselves wondering if he would really veto the Wilmot proviso should it come up for his signature.¹² The situation was ripe for agitation, and, after the passage of a resolution in the House at the opening of Congress which instructed the committee on the District of Columbia to prepare a bill prohibiting slavery there, the southern movement, under the leadership of Calhoun, became more assertive than ever.

Within a fortnight, a caucus of southern members assembled behind closed doors in the Senate chamber to deliberate upon the situation. The southern Democrats went into this new "Carolina movement" with considerable unanimity and prepared to carry out the program which Calhoun recommended. The southern Whigs acted deliberately and cautiously: as conservatives they regarded it as an unwise and dangerous pro-

¹⁰ Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 245, 288.

¹¹ Schurz, *Henry Clay*, II, 323-324. He later declared to the Senate that the power of Congress over slavery in the territories was a "power adequate either to introduce or to exclude slavery". *Cong. Globe*, 31 Cong., 1 sess., Append., 118.

¹² A. H. Stephens to Crittenden, Dec. 6, 1848; see also G. Duncan to Crittenden, Jan. 15, 1849; A. T. Burnley to Crittenden, Jan. 12, 1849. Burnley who was a confidential friend of Taylor announced, "I am quite certain, if a Bill passes Congress with the Wilmot Proviso, during Gen'l Taylor's admin., he will *not* veto it". Crittenden MSS.

ceeding, and as party men they saw in it an attempt to embarrass Taylor's administration and the Whig party. Many of them refused to have anything to do with a movement which might endanger the continuance of the Union: "Certainly not", declared Badger, "for the privilege of carrying slaves to California or of keeping up private gaols by slave dealers in this district."¹³ Others, led by Toombs, Stephens, Clayton, Metcalfe, and Underwood, distrustful of the motives of Calhoun and his "tail", attended the meetings in order to prevent any excesses, and to foil the attempt to form a southern party by controlling the actions of those Whigs who looked with favor upon that idea.¹⁴ Metcalfe was made the presiding officer of the caucus, a position which he accepted, at the urgency of the conservatives, because of the good influence he thought he could exert over the meetings. He was opposed to the secrecy of the movement and had fully determined before the second session to have the doors opened or to retire from the presidency and from the meeting, a decision which he later recalled at the advice of some of the conservatives.¹⁵ The Whigs went into the meetings prepared to commence "the southern family war". Metcalfe as chairman, anticipated a warm contest: "The hot-spurs and moderates will I trow have it hip and thigh, for I think there is as much good game on the part of the moderates, as will be found with their antagonists." Though the Whigs failed to carry their point of the inexpediency of publishing an address at that time; though they failed in their attempts to lay it on the table, to adjourn *sine die*

¹³ Geo. Badger to Crittenden, Jan. 13, 1849, Crittenden MSS.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*; Toombs to Crittenden, Jan. 3, 22, 1849. Crittenden MSS.

¹⁵ J. Metcalfe to Crittenden, Jan. 14, 15, 1849, *ibid.*

before any action was taken, or even to delay action; they did succeed in sending Calhoun's draft back to the committee which then reported it in a modified form and with its title amended so as to make it an address to the people of the United States instead of to the people of the southern states. Most of the Whigs, however, were against any address whatsoever, and by abstaining from voting permitted a motion to be lost which substituted for Calhoun's address the milder one of Berrien which was supported by the moderate Democrats and by those Whigs who favored an address.¹⁶

The southern Whigs explained their course on the ground that General Taylor, as a large slaveholder, would give ample protection to the rights of the South.¹⁷ Stephens and Toombs, who had been instrumental in securing Taylor's election, took a leading part in opposing Calhoun's plans. Toombs wrote to Governor Crittenden on January 22:

We had a regular flare up in our last meeting, and at the call of Calhoun I told them briefly what we were at. I told him that the Union of the South was neither possible nor desirable until we were ready to dissolve the Union,—that we certainly did not intend to advise the people now to look anywhere else than to their own government for the prevention of apprehended evils,—that we did not expect an administration which we had brought into power would do any act or permit any

¹⁶ Eight Whigs voted to substitute Berrien's address, thirteen abstained from voting; Gayle of Alabama alone preferred Calhoun's. Two Whigs, Gayle and Tompkins of Mississippi, signed Calhoun's address. Proceedings in *Niles' Register*, LXXV, 84-88; *Washington Union*, Jan. 28, 29, 1849; Metcalfe to Crittenden, Jan. 23, 1849, Crittenden MSS.; Hilliard, *Politics and Pen Pictures*, 198-200. A good analysis of the proceedings from the Whig point of view is to be found in the *Am. Whig Rev.*, IX, 221-234.

¹⁷ Polk, *Diary*, IV, 282; *Savannah Republican*, Jan. 27, 1849.

act to be done which it would become necessary for our safety to rebel at; and that the Southern opposition could not be sustained by their own friends in acting on such an hypothesis, and that we intended to stand by the government until it committed an overt act of aggression upon our rights, which neither we nor the country ever expected.¹⁸

To this determination of the Whigs to withhold their sanction, the failure of the attempt as a non-partisan movement was attributed. Southern Democrats who refused to sign Calhoun's address complained that it failed to mention the connection of the northern Whig party with the abolition agitation merely out of fear of offending the sensitiveness of their southern Whig friends. They admitted, however, that the latter could hardly be expected to participate in a movement "which rested for its propriety and necessity, mainly upon the apprehension that the rights of the South were unsafe in the hands of those whom they had selected as the faithful guardians of the constitutional rights of every portion of the Union".¹⁹ The Whig newspapers in the South assured their readers that the southern movement was only a means which the defeated party was using to recover lost ground there. They asserted that the projectors intentionally acted from the start in a manner which prevented a union of the parties.²⁰ But, after all, they asked, was disunion a remedy for the grievances inflicted by the North, was it not rather an act of suicide, in cutting the South off from all the advantages which she enjoyed within the Union?²¹ "The South has no

¹⁸ Crittenden MSS.; cf. Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 335-336.

¹⁹ Address of Cobb, Lumpkin, Boyd, and Clark to their constituents. *Niles' Register*, LXXV, 231-232; *Savannah Georgian*, March 14, 1849.

²⁰ *Savannah Republican*, Jan. 25, 1849; *Richmond Whig*, in *Niles' Register*, LXXV, 74-75.

²¹ *Savannah Republican*, Feb. 15, 1849: "A Parting Word upon the Southern Movement."

affection for the Wilmot Proviso", said the New Orleans *Bee*, "and views the aggressions of the North with an unfriendly eye, but the evils which may result from these contemplated inroads upon our rights are a thousandfold more endurable than the woes unnumbered which appal the imagination at the prospect of disunion. The South will have none of Mr. Calhoun's desperate remedies."²²

At the very time that the Whigs were attempting to defeat Calhoun's program in the southern caucus, a number of Whig members of the Virginia and North Carolina legislatures were attempting obstructive tactics against the slavery resolutions then up for discussion before those bodies. Their policy was that of trying to moderate the defiant tone which was characteristic of resolutions fathered by southern Democratic hot-spurs.²³ In Virginia, the Whigs tried to substitute more moderate resolutions and to withhold the grant of power to the governor to convene the general assembly in extra session in case of the apprehended encroachments by Congress.²⁴ But, being in a minority, they were overruled and, "with the exception of thirteen violent Whigs in the House of Delegates, and three in the Senate",²⁵ they gave their votes for the resolutions on their final passage.²⁶ Fol-

²² *Niles' Register*, LXXV, 158.

²³ On the Virginia resolutions of 1847, see *Virginia Senate Journal*, 1846-1847, 96, 97, 111, 129; *House Journal*, 1846-1847, 145, 163, 178.

²⁴ *Richmond Enquirer*, Jan. 12, 22, 1849.

²⁵ *Washington Union*, Jan. 23, 1849. Crallé, a Calhoun supporter in Virginia, thought that the Whigs gave their affirmative votes for political effect: "Indeed, had the action been postponed until after the result of the meeting in Washington was known, I am sure they would not have received the votes of a dozen Whigs", he wrote to Calhoun on July 25, 1849, *Calhoun Correspondence*, 1200.

²⁶ *Acts of Virginia*, 1848-1849, 257-258.

lowing the reception of the news of the southern movement in Congress, the house of the Whig legislature of North Carolina, which had already agreed upon a set of Democratic resolutions despite the opposition of a small band of Whigs, adopted a new set containing a distinctly Whig resolution expressive of strong devotion to the Union.²⁷ The Florida legislature, under Whig control, had already adopted with perfect unanimity a set of mild but determined slavery resolutions.²⁸

To those who were anxiously awaiting the accession of the president-elect, it had become perfectly evident that the slavery question might prove an embarrassing one for the incoming administration. Southern Whig leaders, however, hoped to be able to secure a satisfactory settlement before the time for Taylor's inauguration brought an end to the thirtieth Congress. In the House they rallied about the plan to admit the new territory as a single state as soon as a constitution could be formed and presented. This would remove the bone of contention and would add but a single state to the strength of the North; it would, moreover, evade the issue of the Wilmot proviso so that the honor of the South would not be sacrificed. For the southern Whig leaders were by this time convinced that conditions in the new territory were entirely unfavorable to the institution of slavery and that it could never exist there profitably.²⁹

On the day of the last meeting of the southern caucus, Preston of Virginia took steps preparatory to

²⁷ *National Intelligencer*, Jan. 27, 1849; *Niles' Register*, LXXIV, 415, LXXV, 74, 89, 108-109; *Washington Union*, Jan. 16, 17, 30.

²⁸ *Acts and Resolutions of Florida*, 1848-1849, 111-112.

²⁹ Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 335.

the introduction of a bill along these lines, as a substitute for the territorial bills then before the House.³⁰ On the seventh of February, he submitted the measure and advocated it in a speech characterized by eloquence and logic;³¹ this was a powerful appeal to all sections to rally for the settlement of the dangerous question. "It is a bill", he said, "under which neither party is victorious and neither party overcomes. *It is no compromise at all.* I do not ask my friends of the North to cede anything to us; I do not, as a Southern man, surrender anything to them." Though the bill received considerable support, which made its friends extremely optimistic regarding its prospects,³² it was never given a fair trial before the House. It was amended on a close vote to include an anti-slavery proviso and on the final vote it did not receive a single aye.³³

In the Senate the advocates of a statehood bill were even less successful. There the committee on the judiciary had already made an adverse report on Douglas's California statehood bill with an elaborate argument directed especially against the expediency of such a course at that time.³⁴ The moderate southern senators seemed to have considerable hope that a territorial bill would pass unencumbered by the Wilmot proviso, while the ultras were determined to yield nothing to the North. When Bell later renewed the proposal to

³⁰ *Cong. Globe*, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 319; cf. Polk, *Diary*, IV, 300; *National Intelligencer*, Oct. 18, 1850.

³¹ *Niles' Register*, LXXV, 133-137; *Cong. Globe*, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 477-480.

³² Toombs to Crittenden, Feb. 9, 1849, Crittenden MSS.

³³ *Cong. Globe*, 30 Cong., 2 sess., 608.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 191-192.

admit the territories into the Union as a single state, it was again stoutly opposed by Berrien and defeated by an overwhelming vote.³⁵ But the closing days of the session found the establishment of even a territorial government for California to be impossible on account of the insistence of the House upon the Wilmot proviso, and the question was handed over to a new administration and a new Congress.

The congressional elections of 1849 in the South were of more than usual importance.³⁶ The results there were to determine whether or not the Whigs would have a working majority in the House to sustain the executive whom they had just placed in the presidential chair with the knowledge that the opposition held control of the Senate. For the Whig members who were standing for reelection, it was vital to secure the popular approval for their refusal to identify themselves with the southern movement. Many things placed them at a disadvantage in conducting their campaigns. In Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee, there were very visible traces of the disaffection of the Clay Whigs, which prevented union and harmony.³⁷ But the slavery question as agitated in Congress was of still more importance in determining the result. From the first the Democrats accused the Whigs of unsoundness and the more sectional-minded members of the

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 573, Appendix, 253-255. The vote was 4 to 39.

³⁶ Almost all of the regular congressional elections of the year were in the South.

³⁷ In the Richmond district of Virginia, the Whigs were divided into Botts and anti-Botts factions. *Richmond Whig*, April 4, 7, 20, 26. By placing a rival Whig candidate in the field, Botts was defeated and a Democrat elected, and the Taylor Whigs openly rejoiced, *id.*, May 3; cf. *Louisville Journal*, Aug. 14; *Nashville Republican Banner*, Aug. 15, 1849.

latter party were becoming uneasy. The question of the southern address was made a stumbling-block for the candidates; they were often condemned for not having signed it or worried with questions as to their attitude.³⁸ Several independent Whig candidates were in the field who were willing to go farther than the regulars in the advocacy of southern rights; indeed, the only Whig elected in Virginia was Morton, who successfully contested the right of Pendleton to be reelected because he was held unsound on the slavery issue.³⁹ The Democrats, who often took strong ground in favor of dissolving the Union in case of the passage of the Wilmot proviso,⁴⁰ charged Taylor with being a freesoiler and the southern Whigs with being unfaithful to the South. They even declared that the election of the Whig candidates would give aid and comfort to the enemy, the abolitionists. The Whigs answered by showing that, as slave-holders, they had especial interests in slavery; they made a strong point when they quoted the admission of the *Louisiana Courier* that the large planters generally had voted for Taylor.⁴¹ They declared that they were prepared to resist all attempts to abridge southern rights but that they were opposed to the policy of arraying the sections against each other, of "placing those two contemptible acquisitions [California and New Mexico] in the scale against the advantages of the mighty Union of these states".⁴²

³⁸ Richmond *Whig*, March 21; Savannah *Republican*, Sept. 28, 1849.

³⁹ Richmond *Whig*, May 22; cf. John Pendleton to Crittenden, April 30, 1849, Crittenden MSS.

⁴⁰ Washington *Union*, Aug. 6; *National Intelligencer*, May 7; Richmond *Whig*, May 7; Jackson *Southron*, Oct. 19, 1849.

⁴¹ New Orleans *Bulletin*, Oct. 31, 1849.

⁴² Jackson *Southron*, Oct. 19, 1849.

The results of the elections revealed the disorganizing effect of the agitation of the slavery question. That the Whig losses were not greater is due only to the fact that the Democratic party was suffering, though to a much less degree, from very similar experiences and that certain advantages which the Whigs enjoyed counterbalanced, in some cases, their unsatisfactory position on slavery. The total losses cut down the southern Whig representation in the thirty-first Congress by eight—enough to destroy the party majority.⁴³ The attempt to rally the Whigs of the South at the critical moment had been a failure.

Meanwhile President Taylor was busy preparing himself for the duties of his new office. In the formation of a cabinet, he enlisted the aid and advice of the leading southern Whigs and his selections met their general commendation.⁴⁴ But, much to the disapproval of southern Democrats and of many southern Whigs, he announced no definite views upon slavery in general nor upon the Wilmot proviso. In the South it was charged by his opponents that Seward was the leading friend of the administration and that a majority of the cabinet was known to be favorable to the principles of the proviso.⁴⁵ Exasperated by their defeat in 1848, the southern Democrats had from the start prophesied the betrayal of the South at the hands of Taylor. They forecast the passage of the Wilmot proviso and its constitutional sanction by Taylor; they claimed to be-

⁴³ The Whigs later regained one member in Virginia in a special election, *Washington Republic*, Nov. 14, 1849.

⁴⁴ Cf. Stephens to Crittenden, Dec. 6, 1848, Feb. 6, 1849, Crittenden MSS.; Crittenden to Clayton, Feb. 17, 1849, Clayton MSS.

⁴⁵ *National Intelligencer*, April 13, 1849; Foote, *War of the Rebellion*, 98.

lieve that the majority of the Whig party of the South would not hesitate to sustain Taylor in that act.⁴⁶ The Democrats of the fire-eating species could see no proper guarantees under the constitution but turned their minds toward forcible resistance and disunion. They could not see, as some of their shrewder brethren did, what an obstacle in the way of such designs the southern Whigs in their present position constituted.⁴⁷ The inevitable result was the renewal of the southern movement in a more formidable shape than before—one which was avowedly a popular and not a politicians' movement.

During the summer it took definite form in Mississippi: a state convention was called to assemble in the fall at Jackson "to consider the threatening relations between the North and the South." Even the Whigs there showed a desire to participate in the movement and to make it entirely non-partisan. The Taylor state convention in July, after expressing warm praise for the president and attachment to the Union, adopted a series of slavery resolutions, based on the doctrines of Calhoun, which closed with an expression of approval of the call for the October convention.⁴⁸ The Jackson

⁴⁶ *Washington Union*, Nov. 9, 1849; cf. *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence* for 1849.

⁴⁷ W. H. Hull, a Georgia Democrat, wrote to Cobb, Feb. 7, 1849, referring to the Democratic excitement: "Is it not perfectly farcical that the people who own slaves should be perfectly quiet and we who own none should be lashing ourselves into a rage about their wrongs and injuries?" He foresaw a Democratic defeat in any attempt at disunion. Within a fortnight he wrote: "It is impossible to rally the working people of the country to dissolve the Union for the protection of the slaveholders against a measure which three-fourths of the slaveholders will be sustaining and justifying." Another Democrat, T. W. Thomas, wrote to Cobb in a similar tone, May 8: "What folly to ask the Democrats to get into an excitement about niggers when not one in a hundred of us owns one!" *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Jackson Southron*, July 20, 1849.

Southron thus explained to its subscribers the Whig idea of such an assemblage:

They will meet not as citizens of the South, nor to promote or attain any *sectional* measure or interest; but as *citizens of the American Union*, by devising means to preserve, inviolate, the compromises of the Federal compact under which the Union was accomplished. It will be a time for calmness and caution, for firmness and moderation. No excitement, no display of passion, not a bravado nor a threat will become the dignity of that imposing assemblage. There can be no endeavor to create excitement or animosity in any part of the Union; for the great purpose of this convention will be to promote peace and good neighborhood among all the members of the confederacy and to allay agitation—to put it down forever.⁴⁹

When the convention met and proceeded to carry out the suggestions made by Calhoun as to the proper course to be taken in defence of southern rights,⁵⁰ it was compelled to modify its plans to satisfy a minority of Whigs, who declared against making the admission of California under the recent statehood movement there a cause for resistance, and who considered a southern convention inexpedient for the present. They claimed that without a recognition of these two objections the movement could not retain its non-partisan character. The convention yielded the first point in the final resolutions but refused to concede more than that, except to prefix an expression of devotion and attachment to the Union.⁵¹ Accordingly, an address was sent out inviting the southern states to participate in a convention to be held at Nashville on the third of June, 1850.

⁴⁹ Sept. 21, 1849.

⁵⁰ Calhoun to Colonel C. S. Tarpley, July 9, 1849, *Jackson Southron*, May 24, 1850; also in *National Intelligencer*, June 4, 18, 1850; *Calhoun Correspondence*, 1206.

⁵¹ Proceedings in *Jackson Southron*, Oct. 5, 1849.

During all this time the nationalistic character of the southern wing of the Whig party was becoming more and more apparent. The leaders strongly deprecated the tendency in their section to resort to fire-eating resolutions and gasconade;⁵² they professed to be as ready to defend the just rights of the South as the most loud-mouthed agitator. All of the four Whig executives south of Mason and Dixon's line were loyal advocates of conservative unionism and believers in the future of the republic. Governor Thomas S. Brown of Florida considered the election of a president from the South as "the strongest evidence that could be given of the desire of the North to do ample justice to the South and to regard her rights".⁵³ Governor Manly of North Carolina found it possible, contrary to the almost universal custom in the South, completely to avoid consideration of the slavery question in his inaugural address.⁵⁴ The chief executive of Tennessee, Neil S. Brown, deprecated the fanaticism that sought to array one section of the Union against the other and defined himself as "for the South as long as he could consistently with the preservation of the Union, but for the Union at all events".⁵⁵ Governor Crittenden of Kentucky reiterated the lofty sentiments of his first

⁵² Clayton, who became secretary of state under Taylor, wrote to Crittenden, Jan. 23, 1849, apropos of the Virginia resolutions: "They threaten dissolution if a law is passed extending the Maryland law prohibiting the *slave trade* in this District over our little potato patch less than seven miles square! . . . My soul sickens at the threats to dissolve the Union. This bullying will rouse the North to a great folly on their part." Crittenden MSS.

⁵³ *National Intelligencer*, Jan. 27, 1849; *Niles' Register*, LXXV, 108-109.

⁵⁴ *Niles' Register*, LXXV, 121-122.

⁵⁵ *Nashville Republican Banner*, April 25, May 9. Cf. his message of Oct. 5, in *id.*, Oct. 6, 1849.

message in regard to the union of the states. Closing an urgent appeal in its behalf, he declared: "Dear as Kentucky is to us she is not our whole country. The Union, the whole Union, is our country; and proud as we justly are in the name of Kentuckian, we have a loftier and more far-famed title, that of American citizen".⁵⁶ The contrast between the parties, however, was best displayed in Maryland, where the Democratic governor spoke of resistance and of making common cause with the South, while the Whig president of the Senate sought to allay the violent antagonism between the two sections of the nation.⁵⁷

The balanced condition of the parties in the lower house of the new Congress promised an interesting contest over the speakership. The complication anticipated was the question as to how the handful of Free-soil men would cast their votes. As they held the balance of power, by acting apart from the regular parties, they were in a position to dictate terms or to prevent the election of an undesirable speaker unless the rule requiring an absolute majority for election was abandoned. But there was another little group which deserves more of our attention on account of the independent position which it unexpectedly took in the matter of the organization of the House.

The contagion of ultra sectionalism had by this time begun to infect the hot-heads of the Whig party in the South. Those who had supported Taylor's candidacy with the evident intention of controlling his action and guaranteeing an administration in the interests of

⁵⁶ Message of Dec. 31, 1849, in *Louisville Journal*, Jan. 3, 1850.

⁵⁷ *Baltimore American*, editorial, "Whig and Democratic" in *National Intelligencer*, Jan. 21; cf. *id.*, Jan. 7; *Baltimore Clipper*, Jan. 2, 3, 1850.

the southern states, found themselves doomed to bitter disappointment. Instead, they noted with anxiety that the "abolitionist" Seward had forced his way into the president's good graces and installed himself as the confidential friend of the administration.⁵⁸ Such was the state of affairs when the southern members of Congress began to arrive in Washington, where, pending the opening of the session, they conferred together and compared notes on the situation. Clingman of North Carolina returned among the first, fresh from a tour of the northern states and more impressed than ever with the strength of anti-slavery feeling in the North. He was completely convinced that the entire northern Whig delegation was pledged to apply the slavery restriction wherever possible and that in this it would have the support of the northern Democrats. The conviction developed among Clingman, Toombs, Stephens, and other southern Whig members, that under the generalship of Seward the Whig party was to be made the anti-slavery party, in order to recuperate its strength in the North; they even came to believe that Taylor would sign the proviso if it passed Congress. When the president refused to give any satisfactory pledges, even of a private character, to reassure them, a number of Whigs under the leadership of Toombs, who were prepared to disrupt the party and to go the length of disunion if need be, decided to put their party to a test and to make an issue in connection with the speakership.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Avary, *Recollections of A. H. Stephens*, 25; Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 365-366.

⁵⁹ *Speeches and Writings of T. L. Clingman*, 231-234; Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 237-241, 253; Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 365.

On the first of December, Toombs presented to the Whig caucus which was to select a candidate for speaker a resolution committing the party against the passage of the Wilmot proviso and against the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia. The introduction of this resolution naturally caused intense excitement, which the moderate southern members tried to allay by opposing the resolution, though making it clear that they agreed with the sentiments expressed. When at their suggestion the consideration of the resolution was postponed, all but two of the eight who voted in the negative withdrew, after which Winthrop was named for the speakership.⁶⁰ During the prolonged balloting these disaffected members gave their votes to southern Whigs, sometimes to some of their own number, until after three weeks Cobb of Georgia, a Democrat, was elected on the sixty-third ballot. Toombs, the spokesman for this group, violently opposed the resolution for the adoption of the plurality rule, nor was his purpose thus subserved in making possible the election of a southerner, for by this time he and his associates hoped to force the election of a southern man by southern votes and one not subservient to the interests of party.⁶¹

The course of these insurgent Whigs was criticised and condemned by the vast majority of the party journals in the South outside of Georgia. Their course was not only "impolitic and unjustifiable but altogether unreasonable", said the *Mobile Advertiser*.⁶² They

⁶⁰ Proceedings of caucus, *National Intelligencer*, Dec. 6, 1849. Morehead, who was chairman of the Whig caucus, and the southern Whigs of more nationalistic stripe believed that the North was entitled to the speakership. Morehead to Crittenden, Dec. 25, 1849, Crittenden MSS.

⁶¹ Stephens, *Constitutional View*, II, 178-179; cf. *Calhoun Correspondence*, 783.

⁶² *Mobile Advertiser*, Dec. 12, 1849.

"have compromised the harmony of the Whig party by their silly attempts at dictation to men fully as able to speak for the party as themselves, we hope the Whigs will throw them overboard if they persist in their mad movements. Better have open foes than disorganizers in our own camp".⁶³ "The sentiment of his [Toombs'] resolution meets the approval of every Southerner, Whig or Democrat, but its introduction in a political caucus was *ill-timed and unwise*."⁶⁴ "It was an abandonment of that conservative position hitherto maintained by Whigs of all sections. It was calculated to engender discord, dissolve the ties of an organization, and produce that confusion and disorder which must defeat the hopes of patriotic Whigs everywhere."⁶⁵ "We presume that the conduct of the recusant Whigs is condemned by nine-tenths of the Whigs of the country in all sections", said the *Alexandria Gazette*.⁶⁶ Almost all agreed that the issue might better have been delayed until the question was brought up in the course of actual legislation.

Even after the House had succeeded in effecting an organization the excitement continued among the southern members. Taylor promptly submitted his message, in which he for the first time defined his position on the territorial issue. Desirous of seeing law and order established in California, he had early interested himself in the formation of a state government by the resident population there, as the obvious thing after Congress had refused to do it for them.⁶⁷

⁶³ *Nashville Republican Banner*, Dec. 18, 1849.

⁶⁴ *New Orleans Bulletin*, Dec. 19, 1849.

⁶⁵ *Washington (N. C.) North State Whig*, Dec. 12, 1849.

⁶⁶ Quoted in *Mobile Advertiser*, Jan. 1, 1850.

⁶⁷ See Tyler, *Tylers*, II, 487.

Now he announced that this had in all probability been accomplished and recommended that Congress consider favorably California's application for admission into the Union. Nothing was said of the proviso; New Mexico, he thought, would soon follow a course similar to that of California, and by working out a solution without the intervention of Congress, topics of a sectional character could be easily avoided. As soon as it became known, however, that the newly adopted constitution of California provided for the prohibition of slavery there, the southern Democrats claimed that Taylor was willing to commit the heresy of "approving the Wilmot Proviso in the constitution of California", or what Calhoun called the "Executive Proviso". This was added to the list of possible grievances for which dissolution was regarded as the only proper remedy.

The Whigs of the South were in a position to appreciate Taylor's recommendation. This was the solution agreed upon by Clayton, Crittenden, and Stephens in the previous winter, while the southern caucus was attempting to agree on an ultimatum, as the best means of ridding the president-elect of a troublesome question. They saw that, with numbers against the South, it must eventually be beaten on the question of the extension of slavery, and that to be beaten "in the least offensive and injurious form" was the most they could expect.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Cf. Clayton to Crittenden, Dec. 13; Stephens to Crittenden, Dec. 6, 1848, Crittenden MSS. Crittenden to Clayton, Dec. 19, 1848; Jan. 7, 1849, Clayton MSS.

Clayton was clearly responsible, in part at least, for the adoption of this plan by President Taylor at the very beginning of his administration. On April 18, 1849, he wrote to Crittenden: "As to California and New Mexico, I have been *wide awake*. Everything is done as you wanted with it. The plan I proposed to you last winter will be carried out fully. The States will be admitted free and Whig!" Crittenden MSS.

The idea had grown upon southern Whigs in general, after Preston's plan had been defeated, that the scheme of statehood at the initiative of the new territories presented the greatest possibilities for a satisfactory adjustment. They affirmed in advance as a fundamental state rights principle, the right of the people of the territories in forming a state government to decide to exclude as well as to adopt slavery.⁶⁹ They had advanced to the abandoned ground of non-intervention, of "popular sovereignty" as understood in the South at this time, a ground in which the Democrats no longer found a sufficient guarantee of southern rights, for in its initial trial it had worked against them.

When Taylor, at the call of Congress, proceeded to define his policy at length in the special message of January fifteenth, with which he submitted the documents relative to California, he strengthened his position in the South. The *Jackson Southron*, which alone of the Whig papers had taken pains to express dissent from the recommendation of his annual message concerning California, revised its opinions and adopted the language of the *Louisville Journal*: "No message since the celebrated proclamation of Jackson against nullification has excited anything like such a sensation of joy in all patriotic bosoms as the late message of General Taylor is now exciting throughout the length and breadth of the Union. Everyone feels now that all danger is past. The poisonous fangs of faction are extracted and though it may still hiss and foam, no one will longer heed it."⁷⁰

⁶⁹ *Louisville Journal*, April 25, July 10; *Mobile Advertiser*, July 11; *Savannah Republican*, Oct. 31; *Jackson Southron*, Dec. 14, 1849.

⁷⁰ *Jackson Southron*, Jan. 4, Feb. 15; *Louisville Journal*, Jan. 29, 1850.

Even Stephens was now ready to believe that if any territorial bill should be passed with the Wilmot proviso in it, the president would not hesitate to send it back with his veto.⁷¹ Taylor was now regarded by southern Whigs as standing on the same ground that Calhoun had taken in his resolutions. The object in the slavery controversy, his southern supporters stated, was "not so much to secure the right of carrying slaves into California, as to prevent the adoption of a principle, which would forever confine slavery within its present limits, and deprive the South of any hope of the future".⁷²

All this time the coming Nashville convention was under discussion in the South. The Whig papers generally hesitated to commit themselves to a definite attitude and either ignored the recommendation of the Mississippi convention or announced it with little show of feeling. In Mississippi, whence the call issued, the leading Whig journal indicated a willingness to see the southern states participate in a convention constituted of able men who could lay aside party feelings and sectional prejudices and act for the whole Union.⁷³ The Nashville *Republican Banner* hoped that the necessity for the convention would be gone by the appointed date but assured the body a welcome if it met.⁷⁴ Both it and the Nashville *True Whig* trusted that the southern states would be fully represented by able and moderate men.⁷⁵ The Savannah

⁷¹ Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 244; cf. O. Brown to Crittenden, Jan. 11, 1850, Crittenden MSS.

⁷² Charleston *Courier*, Washington Correspondence, in *Mobile Advertiser*, Feb. 13, 1850.

⁷³ Jackson *Southron*, Nov. 30, 1849.

⁷⁴ Oct. 15, 1849.

⁷⁵ Nashville *True Whig*, in Jackson *Southron*, Nov. 30, 1849.

Republican, however, refused the request of the Democratic organ in that city to publish the address of Judge Sharkey at the late "Agitators' Convention" in Mississippi. The *Republican* was against such speeches and firebrand resolutions; the slavery question, moreover, was threadbare and the people were sick of it.⁷⁶

When the southern legislatures met for the winter's work, the question of a southern convention was considered in connection with the general topic of federal relations. In Georgia resolutions were adopted by the Democratic majority which provided for the representation of Georgia in the Nashville convention; a bill was also passed for the calling of a state convention to consider the mode and manner of redress in certain contingencies, the last of which was the admission of California "in its present pretended organization". The Whigs fought until the end in defence of the right of California to admission, grounding their strongest argument upon Calhoun's resolutions of 1847. When at length they were defeated by the solid array of their opponents, a protest signed by forty-two members, all Whigs except one, was presented to the house of representatives.⁷⁷ The Whigs did not dare to refuse their sanction to the Nashville convention out of fear that they would be branded as enemies of the South.⁷⁸ The resolutions, however, wisely provided that all delegates but the four at large should be selected by the people of the congressional districts at a special election.

⁷⁶ *Savannah Republican*, Nov. 2, 1849.

⁷⁷ *Id.*, Jan. 26, 29, 30, 31. Even Stephens and Toombs objected to the position of the Democrats on the resolution concerning the admission of California. Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 244, 249, 250; *Savannah Republican*, March 22.

⁷⁸ See *Louisville Journal*, April 18, 1850.

In Alabama, the Whigs were divided in their attitude. The *Mobile Advertiser* early expressed the sentiments of the Whigs of that district against the necessity of a southern convention at this time.⁷⁹ But those in the vicinity of Montgomery, the hot-bed of radicalism under the leadership of the fire-eating William L. Yancey, were either becoming infected by the contagion or did not dare as yet to disclose their real sentiments.⁸⁰ Accordingly, a proposition to send a representation to Nashville, moderate in tone and intended as a compromise to suit all, unanimously passed the legislature, with only slight objections from certain Whigs who were opposed to the election of the delegates by the legislature.⁸¹

When the Mississippi legislature was considering the recommendation of Governor Quitman's message of February 11, for a remonstrance against the admission of California with the restriction of slavery there, the Whig members, seeing in it an attack on President Taylor's position, called for a meeting of all persons "friendly to the administration of General Taylor and to the Union". In this meeting resolutions were adopted stating that the admission of California was not an attempt to adopt the Wilmot proviso in another form and praising the president's plan of non-intervention.⁸² A party struggle was going on in the legislature concerning the Nashville convention. There the Whigs successfully fought to cancel the selections made by

⁷⁹ Feb. 2, 6, 1850.

⁸⁰ The Montgomery *Alabama Journal* of April 24 protested against the opposition of the Whigs of Mobile as "calculated to place the Whigs of the State in a position in which their opponents had long labored to place them and which they do not and will not occupy".

⁸¹ *Mobile Advertiser*, Feb. 10, 12, 1850.

⁸² *Jackson Southron*, Feb. 15, 22, 1850.

the October convention, they themselves favoring the election of delegates by the people. Emboldened for a time, a group of them attempted to kill the proposition for representation there entirely. But in the end they were forced to witness the adoption of the plan of having the delegates chosen by the legislature in joint session, which was even more obnoxious. They assailed the plan as illegal and unconstitutional and many of them refused to participate in the balloting for delegates. A protest bearing twenty-seven names, all but three being Whigs, was submitted and entered upon the journal.⁸³ The passage of a set of resolutions condemning the admission of California and referring the subject to the Nashville convention to be considered with the other causes of complaint, brought out additional protests.

In the Virginia legislature also the Whigs posed as the champions of moderation and of the Union. But few could see what good a southern convention could effect in advance of some adverse action by Congress.⁸⁴ Many, indeed, opposed it, stating that whatever its avowed object it would certainly result in a dissolution of the Union.⁸⁵ The Whig members succeeded in substituting for the original proposition, which provided for the appointment of delegates-at-large by the legislature and the payment of their expenses, resolutions

⁸³ Jackson *Southron*, Feb. 22, March 1, 8, 15, 1850. The Whigs also objected to the proposed appropriation for the expenses of the meeting.

⁸⁴ Richmond *Whig*, Jan. 3, 4, 15, 1850.

⁸⁵ See speech of Sheffey (Whig), *id.*, Jan. 15. The Lynchburg *Virginian* was convinced that "disguise it as you will, the object of this convention is to familiarize the public mind with the idea of dissolution". *Id.*, Jan. 24, 1850.

which were said to have been draughted by a Whig.⁸⁶ These looked to the defense of southern rights within the Union rather than out of it, although taking a bold stand for the united action of the slave states in the event of the adoption of certain measures by Congress. For the present they recommended the people to take up the matter of representation at Nashville in primary meetings, which should appoint delegates to district conventions authorized to take final action. The Whigs of eastern Virginia thought this much necessary to repel the charges that they were unsound upon the slavery question.⁸⁷

In Tennessee, the Whig senate passed resolutions refusing, on the ground that it was "no part of their delegated trusts", to have any connection with the proposed convention.⁸⁸ The Democrats in the lower house, however, having silenced the Whig minority, forced through that body a report on federal relations and a resolution for the appointment by the governor of two delegates from each congressional district. Both branches of the Whig legislature of Kentucky frustrated all attempts to endorse the Nashville convention.⁸⁹ The Maryland house of delegates, on the recommendation of the Democratic governor, early declared in favor of the southern movement, but when the resolutions were given their final form by the Whig senate, they gave no countenance to the proposed con-

⁸⁶ *Id.*, Feb. 14; *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 16. Cf. *Acts of Virginia Assembly*, 1849-1850, 233-234; *Senate Journal*, 83-85; *House Journal*, 222-224.

⁸⁷ *Richmond Whig*, April 12, 1850.

⁸⁸ *Senate Journal*, 1849-1850, 764; *Nashville Republican Banner*, Feb. 8, 9, 11, 19.

⁸⁹ *Louisville Journal*, Feb. 28, March 1, 2, 4.

vention.⁹⁰ In Louisiana and Florida, where the Whigs also controlled the state legislatures, the project failed for want of support from the majority party. In the latter state the Whig executive refused to take any step in the matter and discouraged the movement.⁹¹

Most of the southern states had taken their official stand or the steps which determined it, by the middle of February. As far as the Whigs were concerned they acted in accordance with their characteristic conservatism, reenforced by a partisan desire not to embarrass the administration, rather than in anticipation of any immediate congressional scheme of compromise. Thus far, indeed, they had seen nothing which gave promise of more satisfactory results than the plan which Taylor had offered in his messages, even though it began with the admission of California as a free state. All this would seem to show that the feeling for disunion, however much it had infected intemperate politicians, had not reached the mass of the party in the South. On the other hand, not a few sober students of sectional relations—fewer doubtless in the Whig than in the Democratic party—were seriously, yet quietly and without gasconade, calculating the value of the Union.⁹²

The southern Whig insurgents in Congress, meanwhile, were bending their energies to work out the intricacies of their peculiar position. Though they had

⁹⁰ *National Intelligencer*, Jan. 25, Feb. 2, March 4; *Baltimore Clipper*, Feb. 26, 28, March 5, 15, 1850.

⁹¹ *Washington Republic*, March 7; *National Intelligencer*, March 7, 1850.

⁹² *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 2, 11; Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 244, 245, 247; Stephens to J. Thomas, Feb. 13, 1850, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

much in common with the Democrats from their section, such obstacles as differences of opinion regarding the admission of California and regarding the value of the Union stood in the way of a union of forces. This was, moreover, the very point, but in a different connection, which separated them from the administration. They recognized the right of California to be admitted despite the fact that she had decided to exclude slavery from her borders, but they insisted upon making this a condition upon which other questions involving the rights of the South should be settled. They considered it unjust to the South to admit California on any other basis. Their very position suggested compromise, but, not even after some of them were convinced that Taylor was ready to stop with his veto the application of the proviso to the territories, could they unite with him on his policy.

Their position, as finally declared, demanded a complete and speedy adjustment of the slavery question. There was nothing about this which could properly be termed radical, although this was not always true of the methods to which they resorted. They urged it forcefully and vigorously, sometimes approaching gasconade in their efforts to impress the North with the danger of disunion. In a speech on the twenty-second of January, Clingman, after showing how little the South had to lose by dissolution and what beneficial results it would enjoy from that event, proposed to obstruct hostile legislation by filibustering. This policy was properly considered the platform of the ultras.¹⁰³ Within a little more than a fortnight, the

¹⁰³ *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 1; *Speeches and Writings of T. L. Clingman*, 235-254.

Washington correspondent of the *Charleston Courier* announced that Clingman counted on forty-five members as certain to go with him on this: "His object is to show to the northern men that the South is in earnest, and I know that he has brought northern men to a stand." It was part of the policy of the ultras also to change the tone of the *National Intelligencer*, which in their opinion underrated the danger of dissolution and did not disclose the real sentiment in the South; its optimistic nationalism, indeed, was the basis of the hopes of many northerners for success with the Wilmot proviso.⁶⁴

Firmly opposed to the admission of California as a separate measure, these insurgent Whigs were given to understand that Taylor would probably veto any bill for the creation of territorial governments. At this juncture, Clay offered in the Senate a compromise proposition which was nearly all they could hope for, although in principle not radically different from the non-action policy of President Taylor. This was a grand comprehensive scheme, presented in a series of eight resolutions but afterward embodied in the "Omnibus Bill", so called because it undertook the settlement of all questions of a sectional character. It provided for the immediate admission of California; for the establishment of territorial governments, without the Wilmot proviso, in the remainder of the Mexican cession; for the adjustment of the territorial claims of Texas; for the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia; and for a more effective law for

⁶⁴ *Clingman*, 233; cf. letter of Hilliard in *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 25, 1850. Several southern Whigs cooperated with Calhoun and the southern Democrats on the movement to establish a "Southern Press" at Washington to represent the interests of the South in a fairer way. *Washington Union*, May 15, 1850.

the rendition of fugitive slaves. The insurgents saw moderate men from the North, both Whigs and Democrats, evidencing a disposition to be satisfied with what this offered them by combining with the southern members in the House to table a Wilmot proviso resolution which came up for consideration. Then Webster was brought to the support of Clay's proposition and in his seventh of March speech offered much to reassure the southern representatives.⁹⁵ Toombs outlined the situation in a letter to Crittenden dated April 25: "The Senate's committee will, I think, agree upon propositions which will pass; this can only be defeated by the want of common sense and common prudence on the part of Mason, Butler and others of the 'ilk' in both houses of Congress, and the efforts of the administration."⁹⁶

The southern Whigs in Congress were anxious that Taylor should come over to the proposed compromise project. They had lost all confidence in the cabinet and in the influences surrounding the president, but, as he had maintained a reticent attitude as to his own personal views, they had hopes that he could be won over to this policy.⁹⁷ Stanly and Gentry in the House and

⁹⁵ A close observer of these events wrote two years later: "Henry Clay had thrown himself into the breach but he was powerless without some efficient aid from the North. The leading Southern Whigs, such as Mangum, and Badger, and Dawson, rallied upon Mr. Webster, seized upon him, stuck to him, and finally brought him up to the mark. His speech on the seventh of March gave a new impulse to the compromise movement, and the whole country felt that the danger was substantially past. But it is notorious that, in the proceedings upon the report of the committee of thirteen, Mr. Webster wavered again, voting this way and that way, and was only held to his place by the unceasing vigilance of Messrs. Mangum and Badger." *New York Herald*, April 13, 1852.

⁹⁶ Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 366; cf. Crittenden MSS.

⁹⁷ Humphrey Marshall to Crittenden, March 10, 1850; Morehead to Crittenden, March 30, 1850, Crittenden MSS.

Bell in the Senate stood almost alone by the president's plan of admitting California separately.

Stephens and Toombs, insistent upon securing nothing short of the desired adjustment, undertook the task of again sounding the executive and trying the force of their arguments upon him. Toward the last of February they had a plain talk with the president and found him fully determined to adhere to his original policy. In their vexation they unwisely talked of withdrawing from Congress and threatened dissolution of the Union, whereupon Taylor angrily replied that the Union should be preserved at every hazard, and that he was prepared, if need be, to take his place at the head of the armed forces of the nation to put down any attempt to disturb it.⁹⁸ This rebuff put an end to their talk of disunion as a means of bringing pressure to bear upon the administration.

Before the end of April a committee of three appointed by a secret caucus of southern Whig members, went singly before the president to present their views in favor of the compromise and to remonstrate against the continuance of his policy.⁹⁹ They spoke for a number of Whig members who were ready to abandon the administration if Taylor insisted upon carrying it out. If the latter wavered as a result of this pressure, he soon recovered and at the advice of his cabinet changed the editorial management of his organ, the *Republic*, which had quite decided to exert its influence for the plan offered in the report of the compromise committee.

⁹⁸ New Orleans *Bulletin*, March 2, 1850; cf. *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, 177-178; Wilson, *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power*, II, 259-260.

⁹⁹ New York *Journal of Commerce*, Washington Correspondence, April 23, May 2; Washington *Union*, April 28; *Speeches and Writings of T. L. Clingman*, 271; Claiborne, *Life and Correspondence of Quitman*, II, 32.

Even Clay, who had thus far maintained civil, though not cordial, relations with the administration and who had hoped at the beginning to obtain a mild approval for his plan, found it necessary to attack the president's plan openly before the Senate.¹⁰⁰

Taylor was preparing to come out more strongly for the immediate admission of New Mexico, determined to back the boundary claims of the prospective state with all the means at his disposal. When this policy was known the ultra-southern Whigs became still more determined. Stephens and Toombs had a long interview with the president on the third of July and urged him, but entirely without effect, not to carry out his intention of sending troops to Santa Fé to occupy the disputed territory. In a conversation immediately after this with Preston, the secretary of the navy, a Virginia Whig whom they regarded as particularly responsible for Taylor's present position on slavery, they threatened to impeach the president if this course was persisted in. Again no impression was made upon the president. He was soon engaged in preparing a message in which he recommended the immediate admission of California and New Mexico and in which he announced his intention to prevent Texas, by all the means at his disposal, from taking possession of any portion of New Mexico.¹⁰¹ This message, however, was never completed. Taylor's career was suddenly cut short after a brief and unexpectedly fatal illness, the seriousness of which very probably resulted from the mental worry occasioned by his own errors of policy and by the trials of an admin-

¹⁰⁰ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 599, 600, 602, 604, 610; O. Brown to Crittenden, May 23, 1850, Crittenden MSS.

¹⁰¹ *Washington Union*, July 18, 21, 1850.

istration conducted by an inexperienced and incapable cabinet.¹⁰²

By this time the Nashville convention had met, shown its hand, and arranged for a second session to take final action five weeks after the adjournment of Congress. The character of the movement was largely determined by the attitude of the southern Whig voters after they had been forced in many states to see their representatives in the legislatures overruled by the Democratic majorities. Among them the convention project became extremely unpopular and was met with manifest evidences of disapproval. It was denounced as a deliberate attempt by Democratic politicians to break down the support of General Taylor in the South. The charge of aiming at disunion was by many made the basis of their opposition. This was especially true in Tennessee, where, by the middle of February, the Whig editors were at work to counteract the support which the movement received from the Democrats. "*What might have been a medicine to the body politic* in the hands of discreet men, is likely to become a deadly

¹⁰² Mr. Rhodes, *History*, I, 176, thinks that the president was brooding over the threat of a vote of censure on his conduct in the Galphin business, reported to have been made in an interview between himself and Stephens and Toombs which occurred on the second day of his illness. This report was circulated by "Henrico", the Washington correspondent of the *Philadelphia Bulletin*, who himself later corrected the date to July 3, Taylor then being in apparently perfect health. If we are to believe Stephens, no allusion was made in their conversation to the Galphin affair. Letter of July 13, in *Baltimore Clipper*, July 15, 1850. See also Avary, *Recollections of A. H. Stephens*, 26. The subject of that interview was very evidently that of Stephens's letter of July 3, in the *National Intelligencer*, July 4, 1850, in which he announced that if the claim of Texas to Santa Fé was disregarded and the matter rose to an armed contest, the cause of Texas would be the cause of the South. General Pleasonton later testified that Taylor was at the time aroused by the determination of the southern men to organize a military force in Texas for the purpose of taking possession of New Mexico. *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, 180-181.

potion in the hands of those *avowing their purpose to destroy it*", stated the *Nashville Republican Banner* in its issue of February 12. The Whig press of the state unanimously protested against having Tennessee made the stamping-ground of the nullifiers and disunionists. "Tell the plotters to assemble elsewhere!" became the watch-cry.¹⁰³ The Democratic advocates there, becoming frightened at the result, made haste to disavow the idea of resistance and to declare that they were willing to see the delegates instructed to oppose any measure which would threaten the permanence of the Union.¹⁰⁴

But the charge was taken up in the states of the cotton belt and became an even more serious objection after Calhoun's speech of the fourth of March was read in the Senate. The Whigs stated their fears that the strongest supporters of the movement were determined to "press on the consideration of the Nashville convention the propriety of the *treasonable project of disunion*".¹⁰⁵ The *Louisville Journal* believed that "Any individual who shall go to that body assuming to be the representative of the state of Kentucky, had better not come back within her limits".¹⁰⁶ By the time appointed for the meeting, the *Jackson Southron* called attention to the fact that not a "Whig press in the State now approves the Nashville convention",¹⁰⁷ and this was almost as true of Whig newspapers in all the southern states.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ *Nashville Republican Banner*, Feb. 28, March 1, 5, 21, 23.

¹⁰⁴ *Nashville True Whig*, March 9, in *National Intelligencer*, March 18.

¹⁰⁵ *Jackson Southron*, May 31, 1850.

¹⁰⁶ *National Intelligencer*, March 30, 1850.

¹⁰⁷ May 31; cf. *Natchez Courier*, May 15, 22, 1850.

¹⁰⁸ The *Raleigh Star* was denounced by the Whig press of North Carolina for favoring it. The *North State Whig*, after repeated warnings, stated on May 22: "It is no very disagreeable business to expose the

The possibility of a compromise adjustment in Congress along the lines of Clay's resolutions, though in itself not so important an element with the Whigs as might have been expected, was another factor in determining the outcome. The Whig journals generally favored a settlement by compromise but many were convinced from the start that the plan advocated in Taylor's California message provided just such an opportunity. Indications of a growing moderation among northern men made them even more hopeful and they announced that though they favored the convention in case of certain contingencies, in their opinion these contingencies were not now liable to occur.¹⁰⁹

When the delegates to the Nashville convention were selected the Whigs almost invariably held aloof or took an inconspicuous part except where they and the other opponents of the movement were strong enough to prevent action. In North Carolina, Florida, and Louisiana, as well as in the border states, the results were usually adverse to the convention. The Tennessee Democrats, in making up their delegation, found it necessary to exclude all but the friends of the movement to make it possible to act.¹¹⁰ In Georgia, the insignificance of the vote cast is largely to be attributed to Whig disfavor. Bi-partisan delegations had generally been provided for, but in the months preceding the con-

Raleigh *Star*. The paper professes to be Whig, and aspires to be one of the central Whig organs of the Whig party of North Carolina. Yet it approves the Nashville convention."

¹⁰⁹ Jackson *Southron*, April 5, 1850. Hilliard, who was one of the southern Whig insurgents in Congress, wrote a letter to one of his Whig constituents advising them for this reason not to connect themselves with the movement for a southern convention. *Mobile Advertiser*, April 7, 1850.

¹¹⁰ Nashville *Union*, April 13; Nashville *Republican Banner*, April 15, 1850.

vention many of the Whigs resigned, especially where, as in Georgia after the April election, they could rightly claim that the movement lacked popular support.¹¹¹

Some Whigs, however, thought it wise to prove their soundness by participating in the movement.¹¹² Judge Sharkey of Mississippi, who had presided over the October convention in his state and who was afterward selected to occupy the chair in the first session, earnestly defended the Nashville convention, asserting that it was to meet in the interests of moderation and of the Union and to secure the interests of the South. William M. Murphy, a delegate-at-large from Alabama, and a number of other Alabama Whigs desired to see a full attendance "not only to aid in uniting the South but also in preventing mischief if any should be attempted".¹¹³

When the convention assembled at Nashville in the early days of June the great Whig states of Kentucky and North Carolina were found to be entirely without representation, as were also Louisiana, Maryland, Delaware, and Missouri. Four Whigs were present from Mississippi, about a half-dozen from Alabama, besides stray representatives from Georgia, Florida, and Virginia—in all not over fifteen out of seventy-five members from the states other than Tennessee. In the meetings they cooperated to give unanimity to the adoption of a series of resolutions mild enough to be characterized as "tame" by the fire-eaters. But when it came to passing upon the address which had been drawn up

¹¹¹ See letter of Meriwether, ex-representative from Georgia, *National Intelligencer*, June 4, 1850.

¹¹² Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, April 19, 24, May 22; cf. *Richmond Whig*, April 12, 1850.

¹¹³ Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, May 22, 1850.

by R. Barnwell Rhett of South Carolina, the line of cleavage became evident. The Whigs and moderate Democrats of the committee submitted a counter-report which was made the basis of their attempts to amend the address; they were outvoted, however, and were compelled to see the address adopted containing "the choicest of disunion tenets",¹¹⁴ and a condemnation of the admission of California even under the terms of the Senate compromise. The vote being unanimous by states, many of the Whigs took pains to record their individual votes in the negative and later refused to affix their signatures to the address.¹¹⁵

The convention delayed final action until after the adjournment of Congress. The character, however, of the action taken by Congress in the meantime left no room for the work of such a sectional assemblage. Taylor's death removed the chief obstacle in the way of a fair consideration of the compromise plan of adjustment. The new administration, which trimmed its sails to the breeze of southern as well as of northern opinion,¹¹⁶ was found to be favorable to it and from this time events took their natural course. It was soon seen, however, that the "Omnibus Bill" could not sustain the opposition from the North and from the South. On the thirty-first of July, it failed to stand the test and was cut down until only a single plank, the Utah territorial bill, remained. As the northerners seemed to show a disposition toward fairness in allow-

¹¹⁴ Jackson *Southron*, June 28, 1850.

¹¹⁵ Proceedings in Nashville *Republican Banner*, June 4-13, 1850.

¹¹⁶ See Leslie Combs to Fillmore, July 10, 1850, etc., Fillmore MSS. Webster, outlawed by the northern anti-slavery men, was given the state portfolio and a leading voice in the selection of the rest of the cabinet. See memorandum in Webster's handwriting in the Fillmore MSS.

ing the non-intervention proposition to be taken up ahead of the California bill, the southern Whigs gave their hearty cooperation to the attempt to pass the measures separately.

Some of the bolder Whig advocates of southern rights attended the caucuses of the southern members of the House which were held while the measures were up for consideration. In the meeting of August 9, Toombs was made chairman of a committee of fifteen to report matters for consideration, to which Hilliard, Cabell, and Clingman also belonged. Among other things the compromise line of $36^{\circ} 30'$ was recommended as a last concession, with that line also for the desired southern boundary of California. It is probable that the twelve who dissented from these recommendations, when submitted to the caucus, were in large part Whigs.¹¹⁷

The course of the southern Whig members on the various bills showed their consensus of opinion in favor of an immediate adjustment. They were all but unanimous in casting their votes for the Utah and New Mexico territorial bills and the Texas boundary settlement. Even the measure for the admission of California received in both houses the support of a majority of those members who took part in the voting. The adjustment having been completed, the southern Whigs gave expression to their relief and departed for their homes only to find it necessary, after a brief respite, to take up the defence of the compromise measures before their constituencies.

¹¹⁷ *Washington Union*, Aug. 11, 14; *Louisville Journal*, Aug. 12, 19; *Mobile Advertiser*, Aug. 20, 22, 1850; resolutions in *Southern Press*, Aug. 12; *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 13, 1850.

CHAPTER VI.

THE UNION MOVEMENT, 1850-1851.

In order to understand the precise nature of the contests that took place in the southern states within the twelvemonth following the completion of the work of Congress, it is necessary to go back and to note especially the attitude of the lay members of the Whig party there toward the problem of securing an adjustment of the slavery question. Popular feeling within the party at the beginning of 1850 in few cases kept pace with the ultraism which developed in their delegation after the assembling of Congress. The sentiment of southern Whigs was all but unanimous in favor of a continuance of the Union and the course of dissatisfied politicians found little support.¹ Many, while protesting against the application of the Wilmot proviso, were unwilling to see the bonds of the Union severed in case it passed Congress. "Patriotism", said the *Mobile Advertiser*, "should prompt the North to abstain from urging the proviso, and, if the proviso be adopted, patriotism should prompt the South to cling still to the Union."² Every sign of a disposition in the

¹ The Washington (N. C.) *North State Whig*, Feb. 6, 1850, condemned the policy of "Mr. Clingman and his coadjutors in disunion". The *North Carolina Argus* complained: "We are heartily sick of this everlasting twaddle about the South—the South—that word of talismanic charm with southern demagogues. . . . In the name of dignity and self-respect, let us forbear against further gasconading." *National Intelligencer*, March 11, 1850.

² Jan. 9; cf. *Nashville Republican Banner*, Feb. 19, 1850; *New Orleans Bee*, May 31, 1849.

North toward fairness only added to these sentiments of loyalty and moderation, and it was this fundamental characteristic which preserved the party tie at home and temporarily increased the strength of the Whigs by bringing support from the more moderate Democrats.

The recommendation of Taylor's messages in regard to the admission of California was welcomed by his supporters in the South. It was soon made the basis of their attacks on the consistency of the Democrats in giving up the great principle of popular sovereignty, upon which they had risked the result of the presidential election less than two years before and which had until recently been considered the quintessence of Democratic orthodoxy in the South. The course of the Democrats was denounced as a change of front designed to embarrass the course and action of the Whig administration; a party organ in Mississippi promptly pointed out that it was but another expression of the Democratic habit in that state to "REPUDIATE".³ The Whigs explained that the anti-slavery clause in the California constitution, far from being the same thing as the Wilmot proviso, was but the application of a sound state rights principle which precluded unconstitutional action by Congress. Public meetings were held at various points in the southern states of the "friends of the integrity of the Union who are not opposed to the admission of California with her present constitution". These were generally organized by Whigs and the resolutions adopted usually closed with an expression of undiminished confidence in President Taylor.⁴ Accordingly, if the South had

³ *Houston Republican* in *Washington Republic*, Feb. 20. Cf. *Jackson Southron*, Feb. 15; *Natchez Courier*, May 8; *Macon (Ga.) Journal*, Feb. 13, *Vicksburg Whig*, in *Washington Republic*, Feb. 27, 1850.

⁴ *Jackson Southron*, March 1, 15, 22, 1850.

united in denying the power of legislation by Congress to fix the status of slavery in the territories, it was only to divide again, and generally along party lines, over the practical question as to whether the admission of California should be made a ground for southern resistance.

Even after Clay had submitted his compromise resolutions in the Senate, the Whig press of the South continued to support the president's plan. The administration platform, however, was not thoroughly understood away from the capital. Some thought that his plan was to admit California under her constitution and further, what he was trying to avoid, to let Congress form territorial governments silent in regard to slavery, for the other portions of the acquired territory.⁵ For some time the people, in their anxiety for a settlement, seemed comparatively indifferent to the exact terms that should be made, and supposed that Taylor, having made it possible to evade the proviso when its passage was imminent, was now willing to consent to any arrangement that might be agreed upon.⁶ To many Whig politicians in the South, moreover, it seemed essential that the plan adopted should have upon it the seal of the president's approval, in order that the Whig administration might not be discredited on that score.⁷

But when Clay made his public attack upon the administration and revealed Taylor's hostility to the report of the committee of thirteen, a division took place in the ranks of the party between the supporters

⁵ *Winchester Republican*, in *Washington Republic*, March 25, 1850.

⁶ *Savannah Republican*, May 14. Cf. *North State Whig*, April 10, 1850.

⁷ Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, I, 369; cf. Crittenden to Clayton, April 6, 1850, Clayton MSS.

of the two plans. The majority of the party organs came to prefer the Senate scheme of compromise, though by no means did they always take issue with the president. In Georgia, it was soon endorsed with unanimity by the Whig press; this, however, was hardly true of the southern states in general.⁸ Out of nearly a score of the party prints in Alabama only the *Montgomery Alabama Journal* and the *Macon Republican* openly stated their preferences for the president's plan over that of Clay, but they were both leading journals.⁹ In Mississippi, influential organs like the *Jackson Southron*, the *Natchez Courier*, and the *Vicksburg Whig* defended Taylor from Clay's criticisms; but the strongest supporter of the administration in the South was the *Richmond Whig*, which regarded the plan of non-action as most beneficial to the slave-holding states and thought that there could be no ingratitude in the act of dropping Clay.¹⁰

The more aggressive supporters of Clay's proposition complained that Taylor stood in the way of securing a complete settlement. He was charged with being "guilty of the grossest infatuation" in adhering to his original recommendation and in allowing it to be urged as antagonistic to the plan of the Senate committee.¹¹ The administration was even warned that if it continued to press the issue with the advocates of the latter plan, it would find itself utterly without supporters in the South.¹² But, came the reply, there is grave danger

⁸ *Savannah Republican*, June 13; *Richmond Republican*, in *Mobile Advertiser*, June 12, 1850.

⁹ Cf. list in *Mobile Advertiser*, June 25, 1850.

¹⁰ *Richmond Whig*, June 25, 1850.

¹¹ *Piedmont Whig*, *Raleigh Register*, *Richmond Times*, in *Washington Union*, June 4, 1850.

¹² *Mobile Advertiser*, June 5. Cf. Wm. H. Morton to Cobb, July 10, 1850, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

that the compromise will fail anyway on account of the opposition of the ultras; this will prove the sagacity and practical shrewdness of President Taylor in advising "non-action" as more desirable because more practical than "non-intervention".¹³ News from Washington, indeed, pronounced the certain doom of the omnibus bill, with Taylor calmly biding his time. A large number of southern Whigs, who feared that the only other alternative was to take up arms and resist, were prepared in the event of its defeat to see the successful execution of the president's plan for the immediate admission of California.¹⁴

At this point Taylor's death occurred, followed within three weeks by the failure of the attempt to secure a single comprehensive scheme of adjustment. The Whigs in the South had spurned the recommendation of a settlement along the line of 36° 30' as made by the Nashville convention and accepted by most southern Democrats as an ultimatum.¹⁵ They now urged the separate passage of the measures that had comprised the omnibus bill. They called upon all patriots to rally and especially the Whigs. "The hopes of Union and constitutional liberty are in the keeping of the Whig party," the Jackson *Southron* declared. It urged the Whigs to rally around Clay and to try again for a settlement.¹⁶ Accordingly, as the southern Whigs witnessed the course of events in Congress, they commended the Utah and New Mexico territorial measures

¹³ Natchez *Courier*, May 22, 1850.

¹⁴ New Orleans *Picayune*, Washington Correspondence, in *Mobile Advertiser*, June 22, July 2; Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, July 8, 1850.

¹⁵ Jackson *Southron*, June 14, 21; Natchez *Courier*, July 17; Savannah *Republican*, July 26; Louisville *Journal*, June 29; Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, July 19.

¹⁶ Aug. 5, 1850: "The Whig party and the Union."

and joyfully hailed their success, defended the admission of California and the Texas boundary settlement, praised the northern men who voted for the fugitive slave law counter to their own prejudices and those of their constituents, and acquiesced in the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia. *Esto perpetua* was their earnest and unanimous prayer.

The southern Democratic ultras, having made the admission of California under the terms of her constitution a ground for further consideration of the rights of the South and the value of the Union, now found it incumbent upon them to make good their threats. The governors of Georgia, Mississippi, and South Carolina doubted whether the South could honorably continue in the Union after it had been thus insulted, despoiled, and defrauded by the adjustment. If they were sincere in their expressions they saw absolutely no good in the measures which their faction had been unable to prevent and which they thought yielded the very birthright of their section. It remained but for them to rally their forces under the slogan of resistance. The issue was variously stated, but usually as "submission or resistance" and "Union or disunion"; the Democratic fire-eaters did not hesitate to choose the latter of the alternatives. The way was prepared for agitation and troublous times in the South. The Whigs, cutting short their ecstatic rejoicings over the success of the adjustment, prepared to make real their professed championship of the Union, to defend the measures the paternity of which was fixed upon Henry Clay and the Whig party.

Georgia was the first southern state to act, not that South Carolina was unprepared to show her hand but because, while anxious for separation herself despite

the earnest efforts of the loyal Whig minority and their Union Democrat co-workers, she realized that any cooperative movement of the southern states might better start from a state which had not so long borne the odium of discredited radicalism. "What will Georgia do?"—this was the inevitable question when the California bill was passed, for the legislature had declared that that would be an act of aggression which would require the calling of a state convention. Governor Towns removed all doubt and, to the intense satisfaction of most of the Democrats there, immediately issued a spirited proclamation for a convention to meet on the tenth of December.¹⁷

The Whigs, who had argued against this move, set themselves to work to preclude any possible action by the convention looking toward disunion. Praising the fairness of the adjustment in general, they defended the admission of California as a part of it and asserted that secession was no proper remedy for existing grievances. Georgia, the empire state of the South, they said, owed much of her prosperity to the Union and would enjoy inestimable advantages from her continuance in it.¹⁸ They called themselves Union men, members of the "Union and Southern Rights Party", for the regular party line was yielded to meet the exigencies of such a crisis; they welcomed the cooperation of those Democrats who shared in these sentiments.

The activity of Stephens and Toombs, who, despite their advanced southern ground, became with Howell Cobb the foremost supporters of the compromise meas-

¹⁷ *Savannah Republican*, Sept. 25; *National Intelligencer*, Sept. 28, 1850.

¹⁸ *Savannah Republican*, Sept. 24, 1850.

ures and the opponents of resistance, did much toward determining the result. Stephens had prepared the way during a visit to his home while the various bills were pending in Congress; Toombs promptly on his return issued an address to his constituents showing what the South had gained and announcing his readiness to defend the integrity of the republic.¹⁹ Both immediately took the stump, explaining the measures and counseling moderation;²⁰ by November the result was seen when in the election a great majority of Union delegates to the convention were chosen.

The Union victory in Georgia must have had a dampening influence on the second session of the Nashville convention which met on the twelfth of November with ex-Governor McDonald of Georgia in the chair. With the southern Whigs unrepresented, moreover, little of an authoritative nature could be expected of it; the members contented themselves with passing strong resolutions condemnatory of the entire adjustment and assertive of the right of secession by the sovereign states. After six days of fire-eating speeches and discussion of radical resolutions the convention dispersed almost unnoticed.²¹

The action of the Georgia convention was of quite a different sort. An editorial published in the *Savannah Republican* of October 22 explained the purposes of the Union men and suggested for a platform a series of resolutions which expressed acquiescence in the late action of Congress, but which declared that in certain contingencies Georgia would resist even to a dissolution of the Union. This was made the basis of

¹⁹ *Washington Republic*, Oct. 15; Stovall, *Life of Toombs*, 83-85.

²⁰ *Avary, Recollections of A. H. Stephens*, 27.

²¹ *Nashville Republican Banner*, Nov. 13, 14, 15, 18, 19, 1850.

an address issued by the Union candidates for the convention from Chatham county,²² and for the resolutions of a "Union and Southern Rights" meeting there. It was commended even outside of the state as a proper platform to stand upon²³ and was very evidently the foundation of the resolutions which were adopted by the convention when it met and which were generally known as the Georgia platform. These resolutions were drafted by the committee of thirty-three appointed for that purpose and reported by Charles J. Jenkins, one of the Whig members.²⁴

During the session of the convention, meetings of the Union members were held in which arrangements were made for the thorough organization in Georgia of the "Constitutional Union Party".²⁵ One delegate was even appointed from each county to attend a proposed National Union meeting at Washington on the following twenty-second of February.²⁶ In these meetings, Toombs and Stephens, both of whom were members of the convention, were especially prominent. The movement was in response to the desire, especially of a large number of Whigs in the southern states, for a National Union party,²⁷ such as Clay had hinted at in a speech before the Kentucky legislature.²⁸ The local

²² Savannah was in Chatham county.

²³ *Washington Union*, Oct. 27, Nov. 8; *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, in *id.*, Nov. 12; *Richmond Republican*, in *Savannah Republican*, Nov. 9; *Vicksburg Whig* in *id.*, Dec. 16; *New Orleans Bulletin*, Nov. 23, 1850.

²⁴ *Savannah Republican*, Dec. 16, 17, 1850; Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 259-260.

²⁵ *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, Dec. 24; *Savannah Republican*, Dec. 14, 16.

²⁶ *Savannah Republican*, Dec. 30, 1850.

²⁷ *Savannah Republican*, Oct. 22, Dec. 30; *Jackson Southron*, Nov. 15; *Mobile Advertiser*, Nov. 30, 1850; *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, Jan. 21, 1851; *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Jan. 28, 1851.

²⁸ *Washington Republic*, Nov. 27, 1850.

need was evident in such states as Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama, where the influence of the state governments had been for years on the side of resistance and where local disunion sentiment was strong enough to constitute a real danger. But it was intended also as a blow at abolitionism which, southern men said, was becoming increasingly prosperous in the North because both parties found it necessary to court the abolition votes. For this reason many Whigs in the slave-holding states were willing to consign the old parties, as obsolete at best, to the tombs of the Capulets. In their support of the compromise they had noted the opposition of a large element of their party in Massachusetts, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania; they could but place such Whigs in the category of opponents along with the southern ultras.²⁹ Looking forward to the presidential election two years hence, it was difficult for them to think of cooperation with the northern wing, and of entering a national convention where the Seward "higher law" element was sure to be loudly assertive in its demands. Accordingly, the proposed Union party was to be national in its scope in order to crush agitation in all sections.

This movement very naturally found little favor from those politicians who were concerned in the success of the old parties. The central organs at Washington all disapproved of the proposal, although the Whig editors viewed it more calmly than the chief of the *Washington Union*, who saw the havoc it would play in the southern strongholds of Democracy where the idea was most seriously advocated.³⁰ But probably

²⁹ See letter of ex-Governor Metcalfe of Kentucky to H. S. Foote, *Washington Union*, Jan. 7, 1851; also Toombs to A. H. Chappell, Feb. 15, Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, March 18, 1851.

³⁰ *Washington Union*, Jan. 3, 1851.

more important than this was the obstacle that the movement met in those southern states where the Whigs were in control or where they constituted a powerful minority. There the leading Whig journals promptly came out with strong arguments against a National Union party.⁸¹ They stated that party affinities were still strong and that, with the slavery issue now pushed into the background, there was much hope for a successful reorganization of the old Whig party. The New Orleans *Bulletin* declared that the two parties were irreconcilably antagonistic; it denounced "no-partyism" and "suspended partyism" as two of the greatest humbugs of the day—"loco-foco humbugs"—which prevented the Whigs from triumphing over their opponents when divided and which invariably accrued to the advantage of the Democratic minority which worked with them.⁸²

The result in Georgia was largely determined by the work of the convention. The Constitutional Union and the Southern Rights organizations, however, continued and the following state election was contested between their candidates. The Union state convention⁸³ nominated Howell Cobb to oppose McDonald, the Southern Rights candidate for governor, and the Union congressional ticket was made up of former Democrats and Whigs, including Stephens and Toombs. An exciting campaign followed, which resulted in an overwhelming Union victory and a complete repudiation of southern rights ultraism.

In Mississippi, the Whigs, insisting that the state had

⁸¹ Richmond *Whig*, Oct. 26, 1850, Jan. 13, 1851; Nashville *Republican Banner*, Jan. 15, 1851.

⁸² New Orleans *Bulletin*, June 26, 1851.

⁸³ Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, June 3, 1851.

got all that she had asked for in the October convention of 1849, prepared to cooperate with the Union Democrats in opposition to the official influence of the Quitman administration in favor of the disunion cause. In response to an appeal from Senator Foote on his return from Congress, a Union convention assembled at Jackson on November 18, the day for the meeting of the special session of the legislature, and organized a central Union Association, which was supplemented by local organizations in many of the counties.³⁴ In most cases the officers were taken from the Union Democratic members, not on account of any numerical preponderance, for the Whigs constituted an overwhelming majority,³⁵ but as an evidence of the interest of the latter in the Union party rather than in their old party. This was also true somewhat later of the candidates whom the Union men selected to oppose the State Rights nominees.

Quitman's message to the special session of the Mississippi legislature was an appeal for the ultimate separation of the southern states and for a preliminary organization by them looking towards a Southern Confederacy.³⁶ Accordingly, he recommended provision for a state convention to begin the work in Mississippi. As the legislature took up his program, the Whig minority, reenforced at times by one or two Union Democrats in the senate and a few of them in the house, made every effort at obstruction and at the same time unfolded their own policy. They repeatedly offered resolutions acquiescing in the recent acts of Congress

³⁴ Jackson *Southron*, Nov. 22, 1850.

³⁵ Five-sixths of the delegates at Jackson were Whigs. *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Append., 356.

³⁶ Jackson *Flag of the Union*, Nov. 22, 1850.

but these were invariably tabled or rejected. Almost alone they vainly opposed the resolution of censure against Foote for his course in Congress.³⁷ They carried a resolution through the senate to refer the question of "Convention or No Convention" to the people, only to see it reconsidered and tabled, and defeated in both houses by a party vote whenever the proposition was renewed. Whig amendments to the effect that the members elected to the convention should before taking their seats be required to take an oath to support the constitution of the United States were shelved in a similar manner.³⁸ Thereupon, on the last day of the session, a majority of the Whig senators presented a protest against the bill as passed, denying the power of the legislature to call such a convention. A supplemental bill which gave the governor large discretionary powers to call the convention earlier than the appointed time was on the same day defeated by the Whigs in the house, after it had passed the other body, on a motion which required a four-fifths vote to suspend the rules.³⁹

As Judge Sharkey wrote at about this time, the Democratic leaders in the state with few exceptions had "taken a stand in favor of resistance, and they are sustained by the party press".⁴⁰ The Whigs and the Whig organs, however, solidly supported the Union cause.⁴¹ Preparations were at once made for the two

³⁷ Jackson *Flag*, Nov. 29, 1850; Jan. 3, 1851. The vote in the senate was 23 to 8, seven Whigs and one Democrat in the negative; in the house, 50 to 37, thirty Whigs and seven Democrats in the negative.

³⁸ *Id.*, Jan. 3, 17, 1851.

³⁹ *Id.*, July 11, 1851, quoting *House Journal*, 66.

⁴⁰ Washington *Union*, Jan. 10; Washington *Republic*, Jan. 14.

⁴¹ See list in Natchez *Courier*, Oct. 22, 1850. No less than three Mississippi Whig journals took on new names to indicate their predomi-

elections, one in September of members of the convention, the other two months later of state officers and members of Congress. A state Union convention was held at Jackson on the fifth and sixth of May. Senator Foote was named to oppose Quitman in the gubernatorial canvass. Union congressional conventions named candidates to oppose the present members of Congress, who all stood for reelection on the State Rights ticket. It is noteworthy that the Union nominees were all Democrats, making the contest one entirely between former members of the same political party. Nevertheless, despite this and other indications of Whig magnanimity, the State Rights Democrats denounced the Union party as "Whiggery in disguise". Before the Union convention met the avowed preference of the Whigs for a Union Democratic candidate for governor was stigmatized as a "Whig trick", a ruse "to bait a long Whig ticket for State officers with a Democratic candidate for governor", "to give one Democrat office to secure the balance to the Whigs"; said the *Monticello Journal*, "though one should arise from death and proclaim the contrary, everybody would know that the resurrected gentleman was telling a Whig lie".⁴² The state ticket that was named included two Whigs and two Democrats, the former for the offices of secretary of state and treasurer.⁴³

The convention election resulted in the choice of an overwhelming majority of Union men. Quitman, tak-

nating characteristic. The Jackson *Southron* became the *Flag of the Union*; the Oxford *Whig Star* became the *Star of the Union*; and the Carrollton *Whig* became the *Union Flag*.

⁴² Natchez *Courier*, April 29.

⁴³ *Id.*, May 16, 1851.

ing this as satisfactory evidence that he was not properly supported in his position, immediately resigned his candidacy for reelection. He and the "resisters" had moderated their tone as the election approached; now they stated that they were willing to submit to the will of the majority and abandon the resistance issue.⁴⁴ The heading of the "Democratic State Rights Ticket" was changed to "Democratic State Ticket" and the rest of the canvass was made on the basis of the old party organizations despite the protests of the Union men. Senator Jefferson Davis became the candidate of the party in place of Quitman and the election in November, returning a majority of a bare thousand for Foote, gave evidence of the healing of the schism in the Democratic party.⁴⁵ It remained but for the convention, which convened immediately after this, to undo all that had been done in Mississippi looking to disunion by passing resolutions commendatory of the Union, acquiescing in the compromise, condemning the calling of the convention, and declaring against the right of secession.⁴⁶

In Alabama attention was centred on the August elections of 1851, for Governor Collier, a fairly moderate southern rights man, had declined to convene the legislature in extra session in the winter following the adjustment by Congress.⁴⁷ Of this adjustment the Whigs there, as elsewhere, were the strong champions and upholders. Hilliard, though circumstances prevented his return to Alabama in the short interval between the sessions of Congress, wrote several letters

⁴⁴ *Natchez Free Trader*, Sept. 10, 1850.

⁴⁵ The Union majority for the convention had been 7000.

⁴⁶ *Jackson Flag of the Union*, Nov. 21, 1851.

⁴⁷ *Mobile Advertiser*, Nov. 3, 4, 1850.

to his constituents, all defending the compromise measures and urging that the adjustment be sustained in his state.⁴⁸ The disunion issue was not so definitely set before the people of Alabama, as there had been no special session and no question of a state convention. The disorganizing forces, however, acting under the influence of such leaders as Yancey, were no less powerful, though they worked without the declared official influence of the state government.

Union Southern Rights associations and a central organization were formed⁴⁹ but, on account of some of the circumstances that have been noted above, the Democratic tie remained firmer in Alabama than in either Georgia or Mississippi.⁵⁰ After the most prominent Union Democrats had declined to become candidates to contest the reelection of Governor Collier,⁵¹ who maintained a rather non-committal attitude, the idea of a Union state nominating convention was given up and the contest was made over the elections of congressmen and of members of the state legislature. An important canvass followed, made brilliant by such contests as that between Hilliard and Yancey, neither of them candidates, in behalf of the Union and Southern Rights candidates respectively for Hilliard's seat in Congress.

Four Whigs and three Democrats constituted the

⁴⁸ Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, Oct. 9, Nov. 1, Dec. 17, 1850.

⁴⁹ Hilliard to Fillmore, Jan. 9, March 20, April 22, 1851, Fillmore MSS.

⁵⁰ The disunion men there more than in other states tried to discredit the Union movement in the eyes of Democrats by applying to it such epithets as "Federalists", "Feds", "Submissionists", "Soapies", "Coons", "Coonites", "Coalitionists", "Dirt-eaters", etc. Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, May 30; Mobile *Register*, June 20, 1851.

⁵¹ Mobile *Advertiser*, March 13, 30, July 1, 6, 17, 18, 22; Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, June 4, 9, 1851.

Union congressional ticket, and two of each, a majority of the delegation, were elected. The new legislature was safely Union in both houses, but, according to former affiliations, the senate was Whig and the house Democratic.⁵² When, however, the legislature convened in November, 1851, the Southern Rights Democrats hauled out the old party line and dragged the Union Democrats back into the ranks of the party, thus causing a situation which proved to be very embarrassing to the Whigs. Being in control of the senate, the latter pressed through that body a set of comprehensive resolutions on federal relations defining their position very definitely on the right of secession. These were blocked in the house; hence the Whigs had to content themselves with the house resolutions which merely approved of the votes of the Alabama senators on the compromise measures.⁵³ But, what was worse than this, they had to witness the election of well-known fire-eaters to the most important state offices, to swallow a Democratic gerrymandering apportionment bill, and to see the election of a United States senator postponed to an occasion more favorable to the Democrats.⁵⁴

In Louisiana, Tennessee, Virginia, Kentucky, and North Carolina, the identity of the old parties was

⁵² In these Union *versus* Southern Rights contests in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama, the Whig counties in the black belt generally returned Union majorities of the same proportions as their Whig majorities in the presidential elections. The returns further show a strong Union vote in the up-country counties; this makes it clear that the Democrats there were beginning to realize how absurdly anomalous it was that the people who did not own slaves should vote to dissolve the Union for the protection of the slaveholders against measures which most of the slaveholders were sustaining and justifying. See map in appendix.

⁵³ *Acts of Alabama, 1851-1852*, 535.

⁵⁴ *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Feb. 18, 1852.

retained during this critical period. There the compromise measures came to be acquiesced in by the vast majority of the voters and the question of disunion did not become a vital question in the elections. But the Whig attitude was essentially different from that of the Democrats. While the latter denounced the adjustment as unequal, unjust, oppressive, and degrading, "the miscalled compromise",⁵⁵ their opponents united in its praise, stated their confidence in the good faith of the North, and prepared not only to sustain the law themselves but also to compel others to sustain it.⁵⁶ Democrats who inclined toward similar sentiments were spurned in their party as the dupes of the Whigs. Aided by the divided condition of their opponents, the Whigs recovered control of Tennessee, electing their candidate for governor and a majority of the legislature; they made similar gains in Louisiana, and for the time more than held their own in Virginia and North Carolina.

The question of the endorsement of the compromise had come up in Virginia and North Carolina in the legislative sessions of the winter of 1850-1851. In both legislatures, the Whigs fathered several sets of resolutions committing those states to the support of the action of Congress. In Virginia, the Democrats, fearing that enough members of their own party would yield to make possible the success of strong Whig resolutions,⁵⁷ considered it diplomatic to come to the sup-

⁵⁵ *Nashville Republican Banner*, May 2, 3, June 11, July 4; *Memphis Eagle*, May 19, 20; *Washington Republic*, June 17, 19, 1851.

⁵⁶ Wm. L. Goggin, in accepting the Whig nomination to Congress from the fifth district of Virginia, called it the "offspring of patriotism, of peace, of harmony, etc." *National Intelligencer*, April 17, 1851.

⁵⁷ The *Lynchburg Republican* declared that "every Democrat who shall sustain such a batch of resolutions will be accessories [*sic*] and more culpable than the Whigs". *Richmond Whig*, Jan. 27, 1851.

port of a series sympathizing with South Carolina but acquiescing in the compromise with allowance for diversity of opinion as to its wisdom, justice, and constitutionality.⁵⁸ The much more significant Whig minority in the North Carolina legislature was unable to accomplish even as much as this, and after having vainly offered numerous resolutions approving of the compromise, it had to be content with being able, by the aid of Democratic allies, to defeat radical resolutions which affirmed the constitutional right of secession.⁵⁹

Thus far the situation in South Carolina has been practically left out of consideration. There the disunion movement raged for a time without an effective check. The local Whig party was too insignificant in numbers to constitute a real factor when acting alone. Its conservative Union tendencies were, however, nearly as marked as in the other states. When the issue was made of immediate secession of the state alone or delay until a cooperative movement of a group of southern states could be agreed upon, the loyal Whig minority, hoping to stem the tide of disunion, joined hands with the Union Democrats in favor of cooperation. At a time when all the existing Union organs had been silenced, Waddy Thompson and Benjamin F. Perry, the leaders of the two elements in the western part of the state, established the *Southern Patriot* at Greenville, edited by the latter and C. F. Elford. This journal persistently pointed out the folly, heresy, and madness of secession.⁶⁰ William C. Preston, the

⁵⁸ Resolutions of March 29, 1851, *Acts of Virginia*, 1850-1851, 201.

⁵⁹ One set claimed the right to punish such citizens as refused to follow the state in secession. *North State Whig*, Nov. 27, 1850.

⁶⁰ *Greenville Southern Patriot*, March 28, June 20, 1851; Perry, *Reminiscences of Public Men*, 257, 310.

most prominent Whig in South Carolina, who had hoped that the death of Calhoun would put an end to the disunion agitation in the state, threw his influence in favor of the maintenance of the Union.⁶¹ James L. Petigru, W. J. Grayson, and Richard Yeadon, editor of the Charleston *Courier*, labored for the same cause in the very stronghold of the secessionists.⁶² That the "cooperationists" were able to elect a majority of members to the state convention was due not only to their own efforts, but in great part to the unrestrained ultraism of the secessionists, in contrast with the "firmness, wisdom, and patriotism" of the national administration in carrying out in good faith the compromise measures,⁶³ and to the success of the Union men in Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama in checking the disunion movement there. The lukewarm advocates of disunion in the Palmetto state became disheartened when they saw that such a movement did not enjoy the moral support of the majority in any other state. A complete reaction set in which removed all danger of immediate secession.

Whigs in the more remote states of Florida, Arkansas, and Missouri stood for the same ideals that characterized the party elsewhere in the South. In these states, also, they were then working under the disadvantage of being in the minority. But in Florida they joined with disaffected Democrats, prevented any action hostile to the compromise, and chastised Senator

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 61; *National Intelligencer*, July 22, 1851.

⁶² Perry, *op. cit.*, 257, 286-288, 310. See Grayson's Union pamphlet dated Oct. 17, 1850: *Letter to Governor W. B. Seabrook on the Dissolution of the Union*.

⁶³ B. F. Perry to Fillmore, April 22, 1851; J. L. Petigru to Fillmore, May 30, 1851, Fillmore MSS.

Yulee for his ultraism by electing a Union Democrat to succeed him. Missouri Whigs, taking advantage of the split between the Benton and anti-Benton wings of the local Democracy, were able to obtain a majority of the congressional delegation, a plurality in the legislature, and for the first time in their history, to elect a Whig United States senator. The latter was H. S. Geyer, a strong Union compromise man.

The ultimate issue involved in the elections in Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and in certain districts of the other southern states, was the abstract question of the right of secession. Alignment on this question revealed the positions of Whig and Democrat as antagonistic to each other. It was probably with a knowledge of this fact that the Southern Rights Democrats had fallen back upon this issue in order to win back the Union men of their party from their fusion with the Whigs. Even those Democrats who saw no justification for recourse to secession in the existing situation, usually defended the doctrine of secession as a remedy against oppressive conditions. The Whigs throughout the South took issue with the Democrats on this point and were nearly united in their denial of any such right. They held that when conditions became intolerably oppressive and all other remedies had been tried and had failed, there remained recourse, in the last resort, to the inalienable right of revolution. This was the burden of the letters and speeches of their candidates, of the editorials of the Whig press,⁶⁴

⁶⁴ See leading editorials in *Louisville Journal*, Oct. 30; *Mobile Advertiser*, Nov. 3, 6, 27; *Jackson Southron*, May 10, 17, 1850; *Savannah Republican*, July 3; *North State Whig*, Jan. 1; *Richmond Whig*, March 17, 1851; *Natchez Courier*, Oct. 1, 18, 1850; Jan. 31, 1851; *Memphis Eagle*, Feb. 17, Oct. 2, 1851; etc., etc. "Secession and disunion have been discussed so much by the press that they have become tedious." *Richmond Whig*, July 16, 1851.

and of the resolutions of local and state Union conventions, besides those which the Mississippi constituent convention and the Tennessee legislature officially adopted under Whig influence.⁶⁵

To prove their point, Whig editors worked out elaborate arguments on federal relations, some of which had a smack of the logic which Webster used in his famous reply to Hayne. They boldly rejected the compact idea and denied that the states were any longer sovereign and independent communities. They declared the secession theory founded on unsound state rights arguments; that whatever the status of the states before 1787, the people in their desire to form "a more perfect Union" had then yielded to the general government many essential attributes of sovereignty and annulled them to the states; that the federal government was now sovereign in its sphere, in all matters delegated to it; that the constitution of the United States and the laws in pursuance were supreme, overriding, when they conflict, the constitutions and laws of the states; and, finally, that there was no basis for even a reserved right of secession because these provisions in the constitution would then be absurd and useless. They bolstered up their statements by quoting Madison's opinion in 1788 of the impossibility of conditional ratification of the constitution;⁶⁶ some even stated that there was nothing in the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions which pointed to secession as a remedy and printed Madison's letter interpreting

⁶⁵ Resolutions of Feb. 28, 1852, *Laws of Tennessee*, 1851-1852, 719-720.

⁶⁶ Fayetteville *Observer*, April 29; Memphis *Eagle*, May 13; North State *Whig*, May 14, 1851.

the Virginia resolutions." A timely letter from Daniel Webster, the "Great Expositor" of the constitution, in which he denied the right of secession and denounced it as revolution, added nothing to the arguments already offered.⁶⁸

"Of all the vagaries that ever straggled into the brain of a politician", said the *Memphis Eagle*, "the one of peaceable secession of a State from the Union, is the most absurd and least of all calculated to inspire confidence in the intelligence or patriotism of him who shall harbor for a moment the monstrous proposition."⁶⁹ It "is in our view too preposterous to spend words about", declared the *Tuscaloosa Monitor*. "We acknowledge no such right."⁷⁰ "The laws of Congress now operate directly on individuals without any reference to State action", said the *Mobile Advertiser*. "The constitution was adopted by the people of the several States, and is as much their government as are the State governments, and nowhere provides that the people of any one State may withdraw, secede, or dissolve from it at pleasure."⁷¹ "The Whigs deny that the Union of these States is a mere rope of sand", declared the *Jackson Southron*, "they deny that a party of malcontents may cause a State to secede from the Union and not incur the guilt of treason. They have ever held that the federal government is founded on its adoption by the people and creates direct relations between itself and individuals. No State authority can

⁶⁷ *Jackson Southron*, May 30, June 6, 13; *Richmond Whig*, Nov. 27, 1850.

⁶⁸ Daniel Webster to —, Aug. 1, 1851. *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 5; *Memphis Eagle*, Aug. 16, 1851.

⁶⁹ *Memphis Eagle*, April 14, 1851.

⁷⁰ Hodgson, *Cradle of the Confederacy*, 297.

⁷¹ *Mobile Advertiser*, Nov. 3, 1850.

dissolve the Union.”⁷² “The people framed it; who but the people can unframe it?” asked the *Natchez Courier*, October 1, 1850. Whig editors asserted that the constitution provided for a mutually appointed umpire to decide differences as to the powers of the federal government; they referred to the Supreme Court as a tribunal competent to pass upon every possible infraction of the constitution, with jurisdiction of every possible case in law or equity arising under it.⁷³ Their conclusion was that secession was nothing short of revolution, inasmuch as it would defeat the very purposes for which the Union was formed.⁷⁴

They proceeded to consider the practical operation of secession to show that it could not be peaceable. They pointed to the complicated relations that would follow: for instance, the general government would still have public lands in a seceded state and would need officers there to administer them. If South Carolina could secede and be the sole judge of the time and occasion upon which she should exercise the right, then every other state had the same right; then Florida and Louisiana could secede and rob the United States of the millions that had been paid for them, then New York could secede and isolate the New England states, or Louisiana could secede and close the mouth of the Mississippi, or California with the state to be made

⁷² Jackson *Southron*, May 17, 1850.

⁷³ Louisville *Journal*, Oct. 30, 1850; Savannah *Republican*, July 3, 1851; Jackson *Southron*, May 10, 1850.

⁷⁴ Memphis *Eagle*, Feb. 17, Oct. 2, 1851; Richmond *Whig*, Nov. 27, 1850; St. Louis *Intelligencer*, Dec. 9, 1850; Jackson *Southron*, Oct. 11, 1850; Mobile *Advertiser*, Nov. 27, 1850; Savannah *Republican*, Aug. 12, 1851; Natchez *Courier*, Oct. 18, 1850, Jan. 31, 1851.

from the territory of Oregon and cut off the United States from the Pacific coast.⁷⁵

"The President of the United States and every executive officer under him", declared the *North State Whig*, "are sworn to execute the laws, and if they are resisted, it is his solemn duty to quell such resistance, and if necessary in order to do it, to use the army and navy and militia of the country. *War must follow. War as the result of secession is as fatal as any of the eternal purposes of God.*"⁷⁶ "However disagreeable the duties which such a course would impose upon the other States and upon the Federal authorities, it will be their bounden duty to suppress this, as they would any other forcible resistance to the laws and Constitution", was the comment of the *St. Louis Intelligencer*.⁷⁷

The danger of admitting the abstract right of secession, even though secession itself was conceded to be unnecessary at that time, was pointed out by the Whigs.⁷⁸ They felt that such an admission would have the effect of giving countenance and encouragement to the disunionists in South Carolina and might be made the basis for a continued disunion agitation in other states as it had been there. "This doctrine of Secession in the case of South Carolina ceases to be a theory or an abstraction, and presents itself to us as a fearful *reality*", warned the *Alexandria Gazette*.⁷⁹ "The right of secession, as claimed by our opponents", wrote the editor of the *Macon Journal and Messenger*,

⁷⁵ *Raleigh Register*, in *North State Whig*, Jan. 1, 1851; cf. *id.*, July 9, 1851; *Richmond Whig*, March 17, 1851; etc.

⁷⁶ *North State Whig*, July 16, 1851.

⁷⁷ Dec. 9, 1850.

⁷⁸ *North State Whig*, July 2; *Richmond Whig*, Aug. 11, 12, 1851.

⁷⁹ In *National Intelligencer*, Oct. 22, 1851.

" must be either a useless abstraction or a revolutionary sentiment leading directly to the destruction of the government. In its practical operation it is intended to cover the retreat of South Carolina from the Union." ⁸⁰

The Whigs placed themselves squarely on the Georgia platform, however, pledging themselves, in case of any further aggression, to resist " even to a disruption of every tie which binds the state to the Union ". This was the right of revolution, the ultimate remedy to which the Whigs pointed. ⁸¹ They declared that the right of secession was confounded with this inherent and inalienable right of revolution—" a right nobody disputes and terrible to tyrants only ". ⁸² They made it clear, however, that it was not a right fixed by constitutional provision or regulation, that it was justifiable only in case of extreme oppression, that its exercise meant rebellion against the authority of the general government and hence bloody civil war. The *Mobile Register*, an organ of Democracy and Southern Rights which had counselled acquiescence in the compromise measures, wrongly contended that the believers in the right of revolution differed from the supporters of the right of secession " only as tweedledum did from tweedledee ". ⁸³

In order to understand the earnestness of the Whigs in their opposition to the doctrine of secession, it is necessary to glance at some of the leading contests where that doctrine was made the issue in the con-

⁸⁰ S. T. Chapman to Cobb, June 11, 1851, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

⁸¹ See Tennessee resolutions of Feb. 28, 1852.

⁸² *Memphis Eagle*, Feb. 17, 1851.

⁸³ *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 19, 1851.

gressional elections of 1851. In Virginia, where the regular Democratic candidates were believers in the right of secession—"abstract secessionists", as they called themselves, or "amateur secessionists", as they were called⁸⁴—interest was centred in the contest between Botts and Caskie in the Richmond district. During the canvass Caskie repeatedly avowed the right of secession. His Whig opponent, who could not acknowledge the right of a state to secede and who denounced peaceable secession as a ridiculous abstract humbug, declared with his accustomed fire: "I would shoot down every man who dared to resist the fugitive slave law, *or any other law of the United States.*"⁸⁵ "Keep it before the people", declared the Richmond *Whig*,⁸⁶ "that the Democratic organs have denounced all who opposed the doctrine of secession, as Traitors, Consolidationists, Submissionists, and enemies of the South." The situation in North Carolina was essentially similar. "Keep it before the people", said the *North State Whig*,⁸⁷ "that the Democratic leaders led on the movement and discussion in favor of secession in the last legislature of North Carolina, at a time when South Carolina was threatening to secede from the Union. . . . That at this time many of the leaders of the Democratic party in North Carolina (besides the editors of the Democratic papers) continue to agitate the slavery question, and to advocate openly the doctrine of State secession."

In Alabama, the contests in the Mobile and Montgomery districts were of especial importance. In the

⁸⁴ Washington *Republic*, Oct. 6, 1851.

⁸⁵ Richmond *Whig*, Sept. 17, 26, Oct. 2, 3, 9, etc.

⁸⁶ Oct. 20.

⁸⁷ June 18, 1851.

Montgomery district Yancey met Hilliard on the hustings in a joint canvass in behalf of the candidates of their respective parties. Hilliard left no room for doubt as to his position on the doctrine of secession. "The Constitution did not give any State the right to secede", he argued, "but every free people have a natural right to rise and demand redress when the charter of their liberties is invaded. If their just demand be refused, they should overthrow the government. Should a State attempt to resume the powers it had delegated to the Constitution, the Constitution would be violated. . . . Should Alabama be called to assist in the reduction of South Carolina he, for one, would remember he had a double duty to perform—a duty to his State and a duty to the Union."⁸⁸

In the southern part of the state, the contestants set forth elaborate arguments on federal relations. Bragg, the Democratic Southern Rights candidate, stated that the constitution was a mere power of attorney from the states, the latter being sovereign, and followed the argument to its logical conclusion. To this, Langdon replied, beginning with an exposition of the nature of the Union under the present constitution as compared with that under the old confederation. The constitution, he said, provided that the laws of Congress should operate directly upon the people. The people of the states voluntarily gave up to the general government certain powers and rights in which they agreed that it should be supreme, a sovereignty which, he explained, was delegated by the people. Accordingly, no state could authorize resistance to a law of Congress with-

⁸⁸ DuBose, *Life of Yancey*, 264. Cf. *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Aug. 4, 1851.

out violating the constitution; resistance must come from the people, and state authority could not be recognized by the general government. If any portion of the people of a state should think proper to organize an "armed resistance", the act was declared by the constitution to be treason. Should the state government interpose its authority to protect its citizens from the penalty imposed by the constitution, it would evidently violate one of the most important stipulations which it made in agreeing to the constitution. Such an act would be revolution. On the same principle a state could not secede from the Union, without an utter disregard of all the stipulations of the constitution and a violation of the fundamental principle upon which the government was founded.⁸⁹

Within the ranks of the Constitutional Union party of Georgia there was a marked difference of opinion on this point between the Whigs and the Democrats who found reasons strong enough to surmount the obstacles to cooperation in a common cause. When the Southern Rights men there found it wise to moderate their utterances and finally staked the issue on the right of secession, Howell Cobb, the Union candidate for governor, was interrogated for his opinions. Cobb had thus far failed to make his position clear even to his Union co-workers. As he had in his speeches failed to draw a sharp line between the acts of private citizens and those of the state "in its sovereign capacity", his position was ambiguous in regard to the right of secession and the doctrine of federal coercion. Union Whigs naturally interpreted his speeches, as the Southern Rights Democrats anxious to

⁸⁹ *Mobile Advertiser*, June 24, July 17, 19, 1851.

convict Cobb of apostasy charged, as denying the right of secession, and he personally encouraged this belief in his private correspondence.⁹⁰ The Union Democrats, however, claimed that Cobb admitted with them the abstract right of a state to secede and that the federal government had no legal or constitutional authority to coerce a sovereign state.⁹¹ Moreover, his personal organ at Athens was ranting about the abstract right of secession.

Stephens, his Whig associate in the Union cause, whom illness prevented from taking an active part in the campaign, suggested some points for him to make: "In reference to the calling out of the Militia, etc., maintain the right of the President and duty of the president to execute the law against all factious opposition whether in Mass. or S. C. . . . The right of Secession treat as an abstract question—it is but a right to change the Govt., a right of Revolution—and maintain that no just cause for the exercise of such right exists. And keep the main point prominent that the only question now is whether we should go into Revolution or not. S. C. is for it. This is the point to keep prominent."⁹²

With the pressure of Stephens and the Whigs on the one side and of the Democrats on the other, Cobb's attempt to give an exposition of his views on the right of secession resulted in a letter which filled three col-

⁹⁰ Cf. S. F. Chapman to Cobb, June 11, 1851, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

⁹¹ E. P. Harden to Cobb, July 5; S. W. Flournoy to Cobb, July 18, 1851, *ibid.* Cf. Columbus *Enquirer*, July 15; Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, July 22.

⁹² Stephens to Cobb, June 23, 1851, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

umns in the Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*.⁸⁸ He stated very positively that there was no constitutional basis justifying the right of a state to secede from the Union at its own pleasure, that if this right was conceded, the existence of the government was placed at the disposal of each state. Nevertheless, he provided no effective remedy for such secession and could only advise a "kind and indulgent policy" to induce the state to return to the advantages of the Union, instead of coercion "by the strong arm of military power". He then went on to admit the right of a state to secede in case of oppression or of gross and palpable violation of her constitutional rights, as derived from the reserved sovereignty of the states as parties to the compact which the constitution formed. He admitted the "right of the government to *enforce the laws on recalcitrant parties*", but later stated that citizens of a state thus resuming her sovereign powers would not commit treason in conforming to the requirements of their state government. In the course of his argument Cobb admitted that he did not differ much from many of those who granted the abstract right of secession. This was clearly a deliberate effort on his part to straddle. It would be hard to maintain his consistency in this line of reasoning; he oscillated like a pendulum from undoubtedly latitudinarian views to distinctly state rights principles, for he had a double constituency to satisfy, Union men from the old Whig and Democratic parties, and he also found it necessary to compete with the Southern Rights party for the votes of the moderate state rights advocates.

⁸⁸ Cobb to J. Rutherford, etc., Aug. 12, 1851, Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, Aug. 19; also in Savannah *Republican*, Aug. 22, 1851.

Despite the grievances of which the South complained, the Whigs there, though large slave-owners, doubted the advantages that a southern confederacy would give to the slave institution. They realized that it could only add to the fugitive slave evil and to the dangers of slave insurrection, and that it could not improve relations between the two sections. "Disunion on the slavery question would make the whole North what a few Abolitionists are now—armed propagandists—reckless of everything human or divine", prophesied the *Jackson Southron*.⁹⁴ But it was by no means certain that secession would be a peaceful proceeding. It was feared that it would lead to civil war between slavery and anti-slavery, a contest which the institution of slavery could scarcely hope to survive: emancipation in this form was worse than the futile agitation of the abolitionists or the concerted action of the North for slavery restriction.⁹⁵

Certain southern Whigs reached high ground in their defence of the Union. Never, said General Sparrow, a Louisiana Whig leader, would he consent to become a voluntary exile from his country, with its thousand holy associations and tens of thousands of blessings, and leave it to the enjoyment of brawling fanatics. If the evil day came he was resolved to be a soldier of the Union and fight under its banner.⁹⁶ Colonel Gentry, a Tennessee member of Congress, refused to proclaim himself an advocate of disunion even in the event of the repeal of the fugitive slave law. He indicated his

⁹⁴ *Jackson Southron*, Oct. 11, 1850.

⁹⁵ *Savannah Republican*, May 30, 1851.

⁹⁶ *New Orleans Bulletin*, June 19, 1851.

intention of standing by the Union, ready to defend it though it meant a bloody civil war.⁹⁷

At this point the question naturally arises: Did the southern Whigs have any solution to propose for the betterment of conditions in their section? Before undertaking a direct answer to this, it is necessary to consider a mode of redress which occurred to many Democrats who were not yet ready for recourse to disunion. This was the retaliatory establishment of a system of non-intercourse with the anti-slavery states by means of a high discriminating tax on the sale of goods of northern production or manufacture in the southern states, such as was advocated by Governor Floyd of Virginia in his message of December, 1850,⁹⁸ and which in a modified form met the approval of Berrien, the Georgia Whig senator. It is to be noted, however, that the remedy carried with it no larger significance than retaliation upon the North for the wrong which it was charged with inflicting upon the South. It was only an extension of the old remedy which had been discussed ever since the beginning of the anti-slavery agitation.

The Whigs took advantage of this opening to discuss the practical side of sectional relations apart from the slavery question. They were willing to cut off trade with the North, but only as part of their original broad policy of encouraging home industry and the development of the resources of the South. This policy covered the exclusion of foreign as well as northern products, a feature which was connected with the general tariff policy of southern Whigs. It must be ad-

⁹⁷ Nashville *Republican Banner*, May 16, 1851.

⁹⁸ Richmond *Whig*, Dec. 7, 1850.

mitted, however, that, in the absence of any considerable body of testimony from the Whig planters, we have to judge primarily from the language of the party press, which was likely to reflect the opinions of an urban commercial population and to be the moulder of popular opinion rather than its mouthpiece.

The Whigs pointed out that the way to bring about non-intercourse with the North was not by empty resolves or by legislative enactments which would render trade penal. Even if a rigid enforcement were possible, it would but increase southern commercial dependence upon Europe. Before the South could gain from such a course, she must be in a position to supply her own wants, which meant a development of home industry and of home markets. We have been advocating this policy for years, they said, as the true policy of the South, only to have it condemned as too protective in character. But they were ready to overlook the inconsistency if the advocacy of non-intercourse by their political rivals meant a willingness to unite with them upon their policy.⁹⁹

When the slavery question had loomed upon the horizon of national politics and had revealed the disadvantage in which the South was placed in a sectional struggle of this sort, the southern Whig press had, indeed, begun to account for the economic backwardness of the slave states by the absence of a sound system of domestic manufactures and had urged that the omission be repaired at once.¹⁰⁰ But it met with no consid-

⁹⁹ *Natchez Courier*, Oct. 15; *Louisville Journal*, Dec. 11; *Mobile Advertiser*, Dec. 22; *New Orleans Bulletin*, Dec. 30, 1850; *Richmond Whig*, Jan. 2, 1851.

¹⁰⁰ *Savannah Republican*, July 11, 1844; *New Orleans Bulletin*, Nov. 24, 1848, Aug. 7, 1849; *Aberdeen (Miss.) Independent*, May 27, 1848; *Richmond Whig*, May 7, 8, 10, 11, 1849; *Nashville Republican Banner*, Oct. 6, 1849; *Jackson Southron*, Dec. 21, 28, 1849.

eration outside of the party. Now under more favorable auspices, they took up the work with redoubled energy. The subject was discussed editorially under the heading, "The True Policy of the South". "The true policy of the South", said the *Richmond Republican*, "is to stop *talking* and resort to *acting*. Let the puffing of locomotives, the busy murmur of factories, and the splashing of steam paddles be our eloquence. By that policy we shall be able ere long to assert our rights and to prove that right is might."¹⁰¹ The editor of the *Huntsville Advocate* entertained similar sentiments: "Give us factories, machine shops, work shops—give us artisans, shoemakers, tailors, blacksmiths, etc. *Let them be encouraged*—well supported, preferred, and a step, an important step in rendering the South independent and prosperous will have been made".¹⁰² Such was the unanimous opinion of the majority of the Whig journals of the South.¹⁰³ "The encouragement of Home Industry", said the *Nashville True Whig*, "is the 'pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night' that must guide the Southern States of this Union through the bewildering and hazardous strife for sectional supremacy which ever and anon convulses and agitates the country. The

¹⁰¹ Quoted in *Natchez Courier*, Aug. 23, 1850.

¹⁰² In *Mobile Advertiser*, Aug. 27, 1850.

¹⁰³ *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, April 10, 1851; *Natchez Courier*, Dec. 10, 1850; *Jackson Southron*, Sept. 20, 1850; *Nashville Republican Banner*, Sept. 2, Oct. 31, 1850, Sept. 26, 1851; *Memphis Eagle*, Jan. 16, 1851; *Mobile Advertiser*, Jan. 30, 1851. The ultra southern Democrats were strongly opposed to manufactures in the South. The *Columbia (S. C.) State Banner* declared, "We regard every factory established at the South as a fatal blow at free trade, and if this is not a covert blow to the institution of slavery itself, we shall be agreeably disappointed." *Louisville Journal*, June 6, 1849. See also *Savannah Republican*, May 29, 1849.

time has come when the Southern people *must* act for the development of their boundless resources, or pay the hated penalty of conscious inferiority, and degradation in the scale of empire.”¹⁰⁴ The *Savannah Republican* had long reiterated its views that agriculture, commerce, and manufactures were the three pillars upon which rested the fabric of the social and individual prosperity of the South.¹⁰⁵

The healthy results of an effective system of domestic manufacturing were emphasized in these discussions. It was shown that the independence of the South must begin with industrial independence. By a complete development of the opportunities afforded by its great staple, it was argued that the South could dictate terms not only to the North but to the civilized world; northern fanaticism, moreover, would be effectually silenced and the South would be left in the undisturbed enjoyment of her constitutional rights. The time would be past when a “chivalry” politician, “clothed in Northern made hat, coat, vest, pants, and boots, would sit down in a Northern made chair, at a Northern table, take up a Northern pen, and with Northern ink upon Northern paper, write a series of inflammatory resolutions upon the real or supposed encroachments of the North upon the South! And ‘chivalry’ newspapers, with Northern type, upon Northern presses, with Northern ink and upon Northern paper would print the said resolutions and circulate them among the people!”¹⁰⁶

The interest of the southern Whigs in the industrial

¹⁰⁴ In *National Intelligencer*, Sept. 7, 1850.

¹⁰⁵ Nov. 8, 1849.

¹⁰⁶ *New Orleans Bulletin*, June 4, 1852.

development of the South was manifest throughout the closing decade of the *ante bellum* period. For a time they had hopes of securing some definite encouragement for this idea from the southern commercial conventions which met annually after 1850. Gradually, however, they became disgusted with the results of these meetings. They deprecated the tendency, of which they gave evidence from the start, to be controlled by hot-headed politicians who used them as a means of promulgating chimerical resolutions to nourish the sectional prejudice against the North. As they seemed to be productive of no practical results, the demand grew among the southern conservatives that the idea of such conventions be abandoned entirely.¹⁰⁷ By 1859 they had degenerated into a farce and the scantily attended meeting of that year at Vicksburg was bitterly denounced.¹⁰⁸

The Whigs continued to recommend a diversification of the industry of the South as the surest way of securing for it wealth and independence.¹⁰⁹ They urged that at least enough of their raw products be converted into manufactured articles to supply the local market, while some of them even hoped that the South would soon be exporting her products in a finished state and

¹⁰⁷ *Savannah Republican*, April 19, 1854; May 19, 1859; *Mobile Advertiser*, Jan. 19, 1855; *Alexandria Gazette*, Aug. 26, 1856; *National Intelligencer*, Dec. 31, 1856, Aug. 3, 1857, April 8, 1859.

¹⁰⁸ It was a meeting of "a baker's dozen of peripatetic and wind-galled and spavined political economists". *Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor*, June 4, 1859. "It is as clearly a gathering of disunionists, nullifiers, and slave-trade law breakers as if it had met for that purpose." *Vicksburg Whig*, May 11, 1859. Cf. *Mobile Advertiser*, May 14; *Savannah Republican*, May 19, 1859.

¹⁰⁹ *Savannah Republican*, June 10, 1854, Feb. 1, March 1, 1859; *Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor*, April 30, 1859; *National Intelligencer*, March 27, June 5, 1855, April 15, 1857, Sept. 30, 1858, Jan. 27, April 13, June 17, 1859, Nov. 23, 1860.

competing in the open markets of other nations. Then, indeed, would cotton be King. William C. Rives of Virginia thought that by developing the resources of the South and introducing an industrial population, the equilibrium between the two sections might be restored and sectional relations be placed upon a satisfactory basis.¹¹⁰ In an able speech before the Agricultural Society of Virginia in October, 1859, Alexander H. H. Stuart, a prosperous citizen of the Old Dominion and a leading conservative, pointed out that the low prices of raw products showed that there was not the proper relation between production and consumption. "The most effective remedy that I can suggest", he said, "is, to diversify the occupations of our people, to withdraw a large number of them from agriculture, and to divert their labor to other pursuits; to build up home manufactures; to stimulate the development of our mineral resources; to encourage domestic commerce, and all mechanic arts, and thereby create a demand for the products of our farms at home."¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ Rives to Burwell, Nov. 12, 1854, Burwell MSS.

¹¹¹ *National Intelligencer*, Nov. 5, 1859.

CHAPTER VII.

THE PROBLEM OF REORGANIZATION, 1851-1852.

Political parties in the South were in a badly disorganized condition when the time arrived for the beginning of a new presidential campaign. In most of the states of the lower South, party lines were nearly obliterated and elsewhere many deficiencies in organization were evident. The southern movement and the attempt to check it had almost completed the disorganizing process for which the earlier forms of the slavery agitation had laid such firm foundations. Considerable had been accomplished toward bringing about the much-talked-of sectional unity, but sectionalism or southern nationalism, though a steadily increasing force, was still largely negative in character and conditions were as yet unripe for any really constructive work. Accordingly, a basis existed within both parties for a response to the demand for a reorganization which would enable them to marshal their forces for the national contest in 1852.

The Democratic party was the first to act. Even in Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, the Democrats soon discovered that "in preaching disunion *under the cloak of Southern Rights*" they were likely to lose all chances of office and became disposed to return to old party issues.¹ They began to gather in the stray sheep, to inveigle the Union Democrats back into the party fold.

¹ *National Intelligencer*, April 18; cf. *Natchez Courier*, Sept. 16; *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Oct. 28, 30, Nov. 1, 1851.

By the first of December, the Democrats of both Mississippi and Alabama had issued calls for Democratic state conventions to consider the matter of representation in the national convention at Baltimore and a preliminary convention had already been held in Georgia to make provision for the summons of a later body to appoint delegates. Henceforth their work proceeded with comparative smoothness.

Many Whigs also saw a necessity for such reorganization within their own ranks with the glaring deficiencies that they evidenced. The Richmond *Whig* appealed to party men to remember that even if old issues had lost much of their influence, still the principles upon which the Whig party was founded remained "consecrated in the bosoms of American free-men".² Many were sure that with the slavery issue excluded from politics party politics would settle down in the South on its old basis.³

But in Alabama and the adjacent states on the east and west the Whigs refused to give up their connection with the Union movement even after they saw the Democrats gradually abandoning it. They insisted that the Union party was stronger than either the Democratic or Whig parties and that any attempts to split up the Union party for sectional or selfish purposes would be a signal for failure. Union men in the whole South were urged "to dictate terms", by a concert of action, "to the political parties and the political demagogues of this section and of the North in the National Conventions, and thus preserve the Union,

² "An Appeal to the Whigs of Virginia" in Richmond *Whig*, March 31, 1851.

³ New Orleans *Bulletin*, Feb. 11; Memphis *Eagle*, Feb. 21; St. Louis *Intelligencer*, April 10, May 11, 1851.

and the constitutional rights of the South in the Union".⁴ In Alabama the call for a Democratic state convention was answered by one for a Union convention, but this movement came to be participated in by fewer and fewer Union Democrats. The resolutions of this convention, which met on January 19, recommended a national Union convention at Washington in June, to which delegates were appointed.⁵

In Mississippi the Whigs were even less willing to be restored to their old party affiliation. In their desire to continue their coalition with the Union Democrats, many of them applauded the call by the latter of a state convention in January to elect delegates to the Baltimore Democratic convention; some actually participated in the election of delegates.⁶ Union Whigs were told that they were not necessarily expected to give up their old political principles but that the purpose was rather to go to Baltimore to use their influence in favor of the nomination of sound Union candidates. When, however, the state convention met at Jackson, it proceeded to express its approval of the Democratic principles of 1840, 1844, and 1848, which were explained by their supporters to contain no avowal of creed, doctrine, or constitutional principle different from the opinions heretofore proclaimed and defended by the Union party of the state.⁷

Voters formerly affiliated with the Whig party of Georgia could not see how any good would result from a reorganization of that party for the decision of ques-

⁴ Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, Nov. 8; Oct. 29, 1851.

⁵ *Id.*, Jan. 22, 1852; *National Intelligencer*, Jan. 31, 1852.

⁶ *Jackson Flag of the Union*, Nov. 21, 28, Dec. 5, 12, etc., 1851, Jan. 9, 1852; *Natchez Courier*, Nov. 25, Dec. 2, 1851.

⁷ *Jackson Flag of the Union*, Jan. 9, 1852.

tions then at issue. Toombs, Stephens, and other Whig leaders there had committed themselves against such a course in the reasons which they assigned when they formed the local Constitutional Union organization. The Union Whigs still clung to the idea of a national Union convention⁸ but, under the influence of their Democratic co-workers, there was a strong tendency in favor of sending a Union delegation to the Baltimore Democratic convention. This was recommended in the resolutions adopted at a meeting in January of the Constitutional Union members of the legislature.⁹ This tendency became more and more evident as it was recognized that a national Union organization was no longer practicable.¹⁰ Many Union editors, however, issued vigorous protests against such a step.¹¹ Stephens continued to urge a Union convention and advised against sending delegates to the Democratic convention on the ground that it could no more satisfy the principles of the Constitutional Union party than could the Whig convention. Certain county conventions issued recommendations in accord with this suggestion.¹²

While the two wings of the Democracy were preparing for the reestablishment of harmony and co-operation, little consideration was had for the Whigs who had worked with them in either the Union or the Southern Rights party. But the state rights Whigs

⁸ *Atlanta Republic*, Nov. 5, in *Washington Republic*, Nov. 14, 1851.

⁹ *Savannah Republican*, Jan. 23; *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, Jan. 27, 1852.

¹⁰ *Macon Messenger*, in *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Jan. 27; *Savannah Republican*, Feb. 13; *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, April 13, 1852.

¹¹ *Macon Citizen*, and *Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel*, in *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Jan. 28, 30, 1852.

¹² *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 28; *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, April 20, 1852.

who had thrown in their lot with the Democratic fire-eaters, while few in number, had gone too far to retrace their steps. The general body of the party had denounced and repudiated them for their desertion, nor were the deserters at all inclined to play the prodigal. The inevitable attraction was toward the reorganized Democracy; many took the necessary steps toward enrolling themselves with their former opponents.¹³

There were many reasons why Whigs in the southern states should have hesitated to resume their connection with their old party. These reasons grew largely out of the characteristics displayed by the northern wing of the Whig party, to which repeated warnings had been issued only to pass unheeded. The southern Whig members of Congress were the originators and principal signers of the compromise pledge or manifesto which was issued in the session following that which had passed the congressional adjustment.¹⁴ The northern Whigs, however, did not attempt to conceal their animosity to the compromise measures, especially to the fugitive slave law. The situation was daily becoming more obnoxious to the southern members of the party, many of whom came to believe that the two wings had become utterly irreconcilable.¹⁵ Those who took this view avowed that they would rather support a Union Democrat, even from the North, than a northern anti-compromise Whig;¹⁶ it was clear that their confidence in the party had gone. Seward

¹³ *Mobile Advertiser*, Jan. 23, Feb. 8, 1852.

¹⁴ The authorship of this pledge is claimed for A. H. Stephens. Johnston and Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 285; cf. *National Intelligencer*, Jan. 29, 1851.

¹⁵ John B. Lamar to Cobb, April 12, 1852, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*. Cf. *Mobile Advertiser*, April 18, 1852.

¹⁶ *Savannah Republican*, March 15, 1851.

and his following were intent upon the repeal of the fugitive slave law but southern Whigs agreed with the declaration of one of their bolder spirits, that they would "take secession, nullification, and hail disunion as a blessing rather than yield the fugitive slave law".¹⁷ They insisted on the execution of the compromise or "the Union party to-day would be the disunion party to-morrow".¹⁸

Their leaders, too, were chafing under restraints that had gradually become unbearable. Gentry stated before the Whig convention in Tennessee that the two great political parties, in a national point of view, were malformations—"unnatural monsters"; that the only sound platform was the one upon which the Whigs of Tennessee and the southern Whigs generally had stood from the beginning.¹⁹ Toombs admitted during the heated campaign in Georgia that the Whig party had succumbed to the anti-slavery sentiment in the North, that it had become denationalized and sectionalized, and that it could never make another national contest.²⁰ In November, on the night of his election to the United States Senate by the Union Whig and Democratic members of the Georgia legislature, he discussed the approaching presidential campaign and declared: "The party at the North who shall extend the hand of fellowship to us of the South, ought to receive, and will re-

¹⁷ See *Washington Union*, Oct. 29, Nov. 5, 1850.

¹⁸ *Savannah Republican*, commended by *Richmond Republican* and *Norfolk Herald*, in *Washington Union*, July 19, 1851.

¹⁹ *Nashville Republican Banner*, April 5, 7, 1851. Clingman expressed the same sentiment in Congress at this same time. *North State Whig*, April 16, 1851.

²⁰ Stovall, *Life of Toombs*, 89; *Washington Union*, Aug. 3, 1851. Cf. letter to A. H. Chappell, Feb. 15, in *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, March 18, 1851.

ceive, our entire and most energetic cooperation. . . . *We have greater reason to expect this support from the Democratic party of the North than from the Whig.*"²¹ Again, Brooke, a Union Whig from Mississippi, wrote, while candidate for the United States Senate: "As to the next presidency . . . I do not expect to support the nominees of the next *Whig Convention*, because I fear the Convention will not be sound on the compromise. My expectation is to give my support to the Baltimore Convention ticket [Democratic], provided it is not tinctured with secession and is pledged to the compromise measures."²²

The Democrats and their newspapers were not slow to take advantage of the opportunity of making political capital out of the free-soil character of the northern Whigs. During the critical period preceding reorganization in 1851 the Washington *Union* made almost daily assaults on the Whig party on that basis, calling upon the southern Whigs to notice on the one hand the dangerous tendencies of northern Whiggery and on the other hand the nationality of the Democratic party, and urging them not to close their eyes to the teachings of experience.²³ Southern Democrats urged upon the consideration of the Whigs in the South the necessity of cooperating with the Democrats in the national convention; they claimed that "the only hope of the South in the impending struggles for the preservation of her rights lies in the success of the national

²¹ Savannah *Republican*, Nov. 14, 1851.

²² Walter Brooke to H. C. Adams, Jackson *Flag of the Union*, Feb. 20, 1852. In a letter to the editors of the New Orleans *Delta*, March 2, 1852, he stated that this was the intention of nine-tenths of the Whigs of Mississippi, *id.*, March 19, 1852.

²³ Washington *Union*, July 20, 1851.

Democratic party".²⁴ It was difficult for the southern Whig journals to answer these charges with much zeal. The New Orleans *Bulletin* was one of the few that attempted to do so. It could only reply that northern Whigs were no worse than northern Democrats and that the latter gave as many evidences of free-soil and abolition proclivities.²⁵

No vital issues remained to hold the southern Whigs to their old party affiliations. The national bank question had long been dead and buried.²⁶ The issues of internal improvements and the distribution of the proceeds of the public land sales were rapidly becoming obsolete. As to the tariff, the southern Whigs were unwilling to make any effort to secure an increase of duties or to disturb the arrangement under the tariff of 1846 which, they said, in recognizing the principle of protection, had broken down the suicidal doctrine of free-trade.²⁷ They were determined to give no further protection to the manufacturing and mechanical interests of the northern states, so long as they permitted southern institutions to be assailed and southern

²⁴ Nashville *Daily American*, Jan. 16, in Washington *Union*, Feb. 6, 1852; see Macon *Journal and Messenger*, Jan. 14, in *id.*, Jan. 21, 1852.

²⁵ New Orleans *Bulletin*, Jan. 13, 21, March 14, August 4, 5, etc., 1851. It soon became convinced itself of the utter incompatibility between the northern and southern wings of the Whig party and hardly expected to see cooperation between them. Dec. 8, 1851.

²⁶ Outlaw of North Carolina declared June 10, 1852: "It is true that some valiant gentleman upon the other side of the House, occasionally exhumes from its almost forgotten grave, the dead carcass of the United States Bank, and drags it here across the stage to frighten us out of our propriety. He who is alarmed must have very weak nerves, for, so far as I know, no man of any party proposes to establish a United States Bank. I declare, for one, I should not hesitate to vote against it." See his analysis of the other issues, *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 676.

²⁷ *Ibid.*; Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, Nov. 29, 1851.

rights violated.²⁸ Many southern Whigs began to claim that the South never had had any immediate interest in the establishment of the protective system, that they, nevertheless, had advocated protection with Clay on the grounds of national independence and the general welfare simply to occupy a national position in company with their northern allies.²⁹

The Richmond *Whig* had urged, in the early months of 1850,³⁰ a revision of the tariff of 1846 in the direction of greater protection and pointed to the critical condition of American manufactories; by December of that year, however, it admitted that the tariff question had become implicated in the slavery question. The *Whig's* analysis shows considerable insight into the situation:³¹

Now, whilst the Southern Whigs are undoubtedly in favor of any provision which will maintain existing manufactures in the Southern States, there is not the same disposition to protect the general manufacturing interests of the Union until agitation shall be arrested. . . . Abolitionism has discouraged that Southern advocacy which has always sustained the Tariff. . . . The continued agitation of slavery has impaired the support of the Tariff in the South. Slavery is one institution, manufactures another—and assault upon the one must provoke retaliation.

A short time later,³² the same paper pointed out the

²⁸ Savannah *Republican*, Nov. 20, 1851. It was this spirit that caused several Whigs in the North Carolina legislature to assist the Democrats in passing anti-tariff resolutions to that effect. *Laws of North Carolina*, 1850-1851, 512-513; *North State Whig*, Jan. 8, 1851.

²⁹ Chambers (Ala.) *Tribune*, in *Washington Union*, Sept. 12, 1851; *Mobile Advertiser*, Jan. 26, 1851; *Richmond Whig*, Dec. 11, 1850.

³⁰ May 8, 24.

³¹ Dec. 11, 1850.

³² Dec. 27, 1850. Meantime it advocated the encouragement of the domestic manufactures of Virginia, if need be, by state protective legislation. Dec. 14, 16, 18, 1850; cf. Feb. 18, 1851.

necessity of a protective tariff to the North but said that the compromise must be maintained and that reasonable assurances of this must be given by the North as a condition to protection.

The tendency of the times is also apparent from the Whig votes for the North Carolina anti-tariff resolutions and from the approval of them expressed by the *Mobile Advertiser* of January 26 during the absence of the editor, C. C. Langdon, at Washington. Langdon tried to counteract the effect of this statement by explaining that he and many other southern tariff men advocated protection not as a boon to the North, as had been stated, but because they thought that it would lead to the establishment of more cotton factories in the country and hence to a greater consumption of cotton and of the other staples of the South, besides allowing the southern states to share in the general advantages that would accrue to the nation.³³ Sincere protectionist sentiment, however, had doubtless come to be considerably limited in the South and, outside of the border states, it was largely confined to the Whigs of Louisiana.³⁴

Whig issues were dead, the Whig point of view alone remained to prevent party activity from degenerating into a struggle for office—for the spoils, now that it had ceased to be a struggle for measures.³⁵ But Whigs who still prided themselves, as some southern Whigs did, on having taken their first lessons in politics

³³ *Mobile Advertiser*, Feb. 11, 1851.

³⁴ A tariff resolution formed the third plank of the platform of the Louisiana Whig convention of March 16, 1852, which, besides that of the Missouri Whigs, was the only mention made of the tariff question by the state conventions in the South preparatory to the Whig national convention. *New Orleans Bulletin*, March 19, 1852.

³⁵ *Baltimore Clipper*, in *New Orleans Bulletin*, Dec. 2, 1851.

"under Gov. Troup when he unfurled the banner of State Rights against federal usurpation",³⁶ could hardly be held by the tie of Whig latitudinarianism. Such men did not stop with a criticism of the northern wing and of the party machinery with its conventions that, looking to the party rather than the general welfare, almost invariably nominated candidates upon the ground of availability and drew up platforms which contained empty platitudes and which avoided the questions most at issue. They began to see that the Whig party was a party of latitudinarians, who had no proper respect for state rights or the rights of their section. For the rights and defence of the injured South, the *Augusta Republic* stated that it and other southern rights Whigs were willing to ask the Democrats "to bury the hatchet of past differences—to oppose all high tariffs, all vast schemes of internal improvements by the Federal government, all hateful tendencies to despotic consolidation".³⁷

Many southern Whigs formerly of good standing in their party, some of whom claimed to have been sincerely enthusiastic about Whig principles and Whig measures, came on due reflection to see the advantages of the Democratic organization. The Chambers, Alabama, *Tribune* gave a keen analysis of the situation from this point of view:

The Whig party of the South, as a party, is as dead as a mackerel. By the presidential election, it will be difficult to find individual specimens of that species of the great family of politicians.

The reason of this extinction is obvious. The general rule of Whig affinity North is *abolitionward*; the exceptions are

³⁶ Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, Aug. 29, 1850.

³⁷ In *Savannah Republican*, April 24, 1851.

barely sufficient to establish the rule. We do not know why this is so, but the fact is as apparent as the face of the heavens. Southern men, therefore, cannot longer act with the national Whig party. We in the South never had any immediate interest in the establishment of the protective system; but acting in good faith with our northern allies, the southern Whig party tied itself to an unpopular issue, and fell with it. . . . The Union Whigs of several of the southern States are making ready to enlist for the support of the national Democratic nomination.³⁸

The tendency, then, was for Union Whigs as well as the limited group of state rights Whigs to transfer their allegiance to the Democratic party. There was, moreover, a marked tendency among the younger men to desert the Whig party, which, with the failure of the party to secure recruits from the incoming generation, was a serious omen of future disaster.³⁹ But many disaffected Whigs were unwilling to seek admission into the Democratic ranks and preferred to express their discontent rather in political disinterestedness and lethargy.

The leading candidates for the Whig nomination for the presidency were Fillmore, Webster, and Scott.

³⁸ *Washington Union*, Sept. 12, 1851. John Milledge, a Georgia old-line Whig, was prepared to do all he could in the Union state convention to deliver his associates over to the Democratic party. He suggested the adoption of a resolution "declaring that all the old issues contended for by the Whig party had been finally disposed of, and that whereas it was not the interest of the South again to enter into a contest with the other party for a tariff for protection, or a U. S. Bank, etc., but that as there was union of sentiment and harmony of feeling among us all on these points under the present policy and measures of the Gov., be it resolved that no sacrifice of principle or honor would attach to those who heretofore acted with that party, by joining the Democratic party which from evidences before us were our most reliable friends for the protection of our rights and the salvation of our Union". Milledge to Cobb, April 17, 1852. *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

³⁹ P. Clayton to Cobb, May 5, 1851, *ibid*. See also Claiborne, *Seventy-five Years in Old Virginia*, 132.

The former had by his firmness and fairness in the executive office, especially in the execution of the fugitive slave law, ingratiated himself in the hearts of the Whigs in the southern states. They almost unanimously believed that there was a moral obligation resting upon them to support him for reelection and, as an expression of their confidence and approbation, they began at an early date to urge his nomination as their first choice. They inclined favorably, too, toward the presidential aspirations of the Massachusetts statesman, whose course since his seventh of March speech had given him a new and well-deserved popularity in the South. Men like Stephens and Toombs were able to appreciate Webster's remarkable abilities as a statesman as well as the sacrifice he had made in his breach with the past; as the result of personal and intimate association with him at Washington, they felt the honesty and sincerity of his services in behalf of the compromise and the Union. The movement for Scott, on the other hand, had originated entirely in the North. Whigs in Indiana, Pennsylvania, New York, and Ohio declared him to be their choice in the same breath in which they expressed their strong anti-slavery and anti-compromise convictions.

Journals in the South soon began to talk about a coalition between the Free-soil leaders and the friends of General Scott.⁴⁰ When it was learned that Seward had declared that he would take Scott without asking any questions, the necessity was urged by southern Whigs of securing from the latter pledges satisfactory to the South before his name could even be considered

⁴⁰ *Nashville Union*, Feb. 11, 1851.

by them.⁴¹ This discussion was precipitated by Scott's nomination by the Whigs of Pennsylvania in a convention which, while adopting a resolution for the observance of the compromise, firmly voted down an amendment which recognized the finality of the fugitive slave law. In this convention, too, Governor Johnston, the Whig nominee for reelection, stated that the compromise was just as much open to discussion and modification as the tariff act of 1846. Protests were at once raised by the southern Whigs and the distrust was much more widely felt than expressed. The *Nashville Republican Banner* and the *St. Louis Intelligencer* made haste to repudiate the position of the Whig party in Pennsylvania, and the latter issued a further warning by pointing to the non-committal position of Scott on the fugitive slave law in connection with the solicitude of abolition and free-soil Whigs in his behalf.⁴² But the *Savannah Republican* was still more outspoken in its opinions. "Candour requires us to say to our Northern brethren once for all", it declared, "that *they* may nominate Gen. Scott (and possibly elect him, though we doubt it,) but that no party at the South can take part either in his nomination or election. Not one Southern State would cast its vote for him, except perhaps Kentucky, and we hope that she would not. . . . The fact that he comes forward under the auspices of Mr. Seward of New York and Gov. Johnston of Pennsylvania—in neither of whom the South has one particle of

⁴¹ New Orleans *Picayune*, in *Mobile Advertiser*, Feb. 22, 1851. Cf. *Washington Union*, June 4; *Missouri Republican*, May 2; *St. Louis Intelligencer*, May 3, 1851.

⁴² *Nashville Republican Banner*, July 4; *St. Louis Intelligencer*, July 2, 3, 1851. The *Intelligencer's* attitude came to be endorsed by the entire Whig press of Missouri, *id.*, Aug. 23, 1851.

confidence—is enough to damn him to utter defeat in this section of the Confederacy.”⁴³

Even those southern Whigs who were satisfied that Scott himself was sound upon the slavery issue and an unequivocal supporter of the compromise, recognized the extent of the distrust among the conservatives, who were much more fearful of northern sectional movements than they were of fighting secession in their midst.⁴⁴ The demand was definitely made that, in order to purge himself of the infection and suspicion attached to his companionship with free-soil Whigs and to show his willingness to cut loose from such associates, “he must say he is in favor of the fugitive slave law.”⁴⁵

Events in the North were carefully followed by the southern Whig journals and their recommendations shaped accordingly. They found the proceedings of the Ohio Whig convention, which also nominated Scott, even less to their liking than those of the Pennsylvania body.⁴⁶ They anticipated with a sense of satisfaction the defeat of Governor Johnston, the Whig gubernatorial candidate in Pennsylvania, who was generally condemned by them for his hostility to the fugitive slave law and for his action in the fugitive slave case known as the Christiana riot, which occurred in Pennsylvania during the canvass; they rejoiced when they saw his defeat an accomplished fact.⁴⁷ When the two

⁴³ *Savannah Republican*, July 1, 1851.

⁴⁴ *Nashville Republican Banner*, Sept. 24; cf. *Memphis Eagle*, July 17, 1851.

⁴⁵ *New Orleans Bulletin*, July 14; cf. *St. Louis Intelligencer*, July 3, 1851.

⁴⁶ *St. Louis Intelligencer*, July 12, 1851.

⁴⁷ *New Orleans Bulletin*, Sept. 24, Oct. 25; *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Oct. 29; *St. Louis Intelligencer*, Oct. 12; *Savannah Republican*, Oct. 22, 31; etc.

factions of the New York Whigs, the Fillmore and Webster following and the Seward group, formed a temporary coalition upon the so-called Albany platform, Whig papers in the South boldly criticized the platform as too restricted and as lacking in soundness. "It forms no basis", said the Baltimore *American*, "upon which the men that made it can look their southern brethren honestly in the face."⁴⁸ The situation aroused Clay to write a letter denouncing the action of the New York Whigs as too equivocal in regard to the acceptance of the compromise.⁴⁹ Many southern Whigs came to believe that the respective positions of the two sections of the party were so essentially incompatible as to make harmonious cooperation and consultation an impossibility.

When southern Whigs began seriously to consider the question of a national nominating convention, they began to formulate the demands which they intended to make of it. They insisted that to secure southern support the nominee must be a national Whig, a Union man, and "to be such, he must avow himself boldly and openly, as have FILLMORE and WEBSTER, the friend and staunch advocate of the compromise as a final settlement of all the questions connected with slavery."⁵⁰ "This", said the Memphis *Eagle*, "is a *sine qua non* with every man in the South who is in favor of remaining in the Union at all."⁵¹ "The present is a crisis in the history of the Whig party", said the St.

⁴⁸ Washington *Union*, Aug. 14; cf. *id.*, Aug. 7, 13; Memphis *Eagle*, Sept. 13, 25; Savannah *Republican*, Oct. 31.

⁴⁹ Letter in full in Washington *Union*, Oct. 23.

⁵⁰ New Orleans *Bulletin*, July 11; cf. *id.*, Nov. 18, 28; Savannah *Republican*, Oct. 31; Memphis *Eagle*, Nov. 11, 1851.

⁵¹ Oct. 21.

Louis *Intelligencer*. "If the Northern Whigs attempt to force upon us a candidate with Free-soil tendencies, the inevitable result will be that the Whigs of the South and West will nominate a candidate of their own, who is known to be sound on the subject, and will adhere to him through evil and through good report, preferring an honorable defeat to an inglorious victory."⁵² Governor Brown of Florida formulated a definite plan of action. He and many Whigs of that state favored a national Union convention, but if this proved impossible, he thought that all the southern states ought to send delegates to the Whig convention, but under instructions to require, before proceeding to the nominations, the adoption of resolutions which would permit the consideration of only those candidates who supported the compromise measures, especially the fugitive slave law, and who were against its repeal or essential modification. Without such an explicit declaration by the convention, the southern delegates were to withdraw.⁵³ This became, indeed, the platform of the southern Whigs.

It must be remembered, however, that the control of the party rested with the northern wing, and that, although in the North there was the division into free-soil Whigs and "silver-grey" or national Whigs, the former without doubt constituted a considerable majority. The nominee for the presidency was fairly certain to be the favorite candidate of the North, in this case General Scott, the "available candidate". The position upon which the anti-slavery element insisted was that the Whigs of each section should be allowed

⁵² Washington *Republic*, July 23, 1851.

⁵³ Governor Thos. Brown to W. G. M. Davis, Sept. 4, 1851, Washington *Republic*, Oct. 22, 1851.

to hold their own views on slavery; that cooperation in the national convention should depend solely upon the support of Whig principles and measures: "You may 'compromise' a tariff question, or a land or a money question. But you cannot 'compromise' a question of human freedom."⁵⁴ It was in accordance with their desires and in order to retain their support that General Scott had refrained from publishing his views on slavery and the compromise.⁵⁵

But the southern Whigs were insistent that Scott should make an open, unqualified, and unequivocal announcement of his position. It was not enough that he had favored the passage of the compromise measures from the time of their introduction; it was not enough that he was known to have taken an active part in the great Union meeting in New York at Castle Garden in May, 1850; it was not even enough that he had, after President Taylor's death, been temporarily placed by Fillmore at the head of the war department and in that position had exerted a powerful influence in favor of the compromise measures. Some safeguard for the future was expected and demanded.

This situation was discussed by the southern members of Congress. Cabell, a Florida Union Whig, who, like Stephens, Toombs, Gentry, Brooke, Marshall, and others, had lost faith in the Whig party with its sectional divisions and was preparing to look about for a new and more favorable alignment, began the discussion with a speech on the third of February in which he considered the position of the Union and Whig

⁵⁴ New York *Tribune*, Washington Correspondence, April 7, in Washington *Union*, April 14, 1852.

⁵⁵ Cf. Winfield Scott to —, March 26, 1851, Washington *Republic*, Oct. 1, 1851.

parties. Declaring Fillmore to be his choice for the presidency, he admitted that Scott's past attitude toward the compromise had been favorable to southern support. More recent developments, however, had rendered it essential that Scott first, if it was not already too late to extricate himself from his false position, place himself fully and clearly on record. "In his present position, if nominated by the Whig party for the presidency, I do not believe that in my State he would receive fifty votes; and I am quite sure that he could not get the electoral vote of one Southern State."⁵⁶ A month later Humphrey Marshall wrote privately to the editor of the *Buffalo Commercial Advertiser* regarding Scott: "In his present position he cannot obtain the vote of Kentucky any more than he can command the powers of heaven."⁵⁷ On the last of March, Williams of Tennessee made substantially the same announcement before the House in regard to the attitude of his own state toward Scott.⁵⁸ Stephens and Toombs, like the majority of Georgia Whigs, or Union men as they preferred to call themselves, hesitated whether or not to accept any pledges at this late date.⁵⁹ They feared after their experience with Taylor that if Seward controlled Scott now, there could be no reason

⁵⁶ *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., 451-457. On March 20, 1852, Cabell wrote to a New York cotton Whig declaring that with the nomination of a sectional candidate over Fillmore by the Whig convention, "the Whig party would and should, as a party, cease in the Southern States". *Albany State Register*, in *Washington Republic*, April 3, 1852.

⁵⁷ April 7, 1852.

⁵⁸ *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., 940; Appendix, 371-373; *New York Herald*, April 1, 1852.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, May 11, 1852. Toombs was preparing to support the nominee of the Baltimore Democratic Convention. Toombs to Cobb, May 27, 1852, *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

to hope for better things after his election. Moreover, a private letter of Henry Clay had been published which revealed his preference for Fillmore as "tried and found true, faithful, honest, and conscientious". This was used to discredit Scott's candidature in the South.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, despite all the influences at work, Scott seems to have steadily acquired new strength in the southern states. During January and February, 1852, a number of Whig politicians from the South prepared to give him their support in the presidential contest.⁶¹ His friends among the southern members of Congress came to include a loyal little following made up of Stanly and Senator Mangum of North Carolina, Senators Bell and Jones of Tennessee, and Ward of Kentucky,⁶² while others like Cullom of Kentucky held the way clear for the support of Scott, whom they professed to believe unquestionably sound.⁶³ Stanly wrote a letter intended to reconcile southern Whigs to Scott's nomination, representing him as a strong supporter of the compromise measures at all times. He further stated that the fact that Whig anti-slavery men declared their purpose to support Scott constituted no objection to his receiving the support of the southern Whigs.⁶⁴ On April 7 Ward announced to the House his support

⁶⁰ Clay, *Private Correspondence*, 628. Also in *Washington Republic*, March 18; *Washington Union*, March 19.

⁶¹ *Charleston Courier*, *Washington Correspondence*, in *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Feb. 3, 1852. A caucus of Whig members of the Delaware legislature toward the last of February passed resolutions in favor of his nomination. *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 28, 1852.

⁶² Cf. H. Greeley to Weed, April 18, 1852. *Memoir of Thurlow Weed*, 217.

⁶³ See his speech on May 17, *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., 1382-1383.

⁶⁴ *Washington Union*, April 10, 1852.

of Scott, contending that his nomination meant the best hope of Whig success.⁶⁵ Mangum boldly declared Scott his first choice before the Senate on April 18; although he stated that his candidate could present "as clean a bill of political health" as could Fillmore, Webster, or Clay,⁶⁶ he was rebuked for his action by a considerable portion of the Whig press of his own state and denounced by many of his party in the lower South.⁶⁷ The Richmond *Whig* had already announced its entire confidence in Scott without pledges and could see nothing discreditable to him if he received the votes of free-soilers or of any one else.⁶⁸ The editors of the Louisville *Journal* and of the Nashville *Republican Banner* returned home from a visit to Washington prepared to support Scott.⁶⁹ The certainty of his nomination was beginning to be realized in the South. Fillmore was the first choice of the Whigs there, Webster undoubtedly the second, but they had to decide on a policy if Scott was nominated. Many accordingly concluded not to burn their bridges behind them, but, conceding the latter's soundness, prepared to support him if a better compromise man was not named.⁷⁰

It is important to notice the general position of the southern Whigs in Congress at this time in connection with their attitude towards Scott's candidacy. Men like Stephens, Toombs, Cabell, Brooke, and Clingman

⁶⁵ New York *Herald*, April 8, 1852.

⁶⁶ *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., 1076-1080.

⁶⁷ See D. Heartt to Mangum, March 31, 1852, Mangum MSS.

⁶⁸ March 18, 1852. J. M. Botts became a firm supporter of Scott in the Richmond district.

⁶⁹ Washington *Union*, May 5, 1852.

⁷⁰ Nashville *Republican Banner*, March 9, 11; Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, March 26, April 9; New Orleans *Bulletin*, May 25; Memphis *Eagle and Enquirer*, May 19; etc., 1852.

who had abandoned the party tie in the local contests over the compromise measures, with such men as Marshall of Kentucky, Gentry and Williams of Tennessee, Moore and Landry of Louisiana, Outlaw of North Carolina, and Strother of Virginia—indeed, a considerable majority of the southern Whig members—had become “Southern Whigs” in a special sense, devoted more to the interests of their section than to those of the national party. By testimonials of devotion to the old party principles they showed that they had strayed but little from orthodox whiggery, but they made it equally clear that they had prepared their minds for a breach with northern anti-slavery whiggery. They were fully conscious that the slavery agitation might be renewed at any time. They did not know how soon some bold step by their political associates in the North would provoke them to break off all cooperation; yet they felt that the southern section of the party could endure no further insult from the northern wing. Several southern Whigs had come to Washington expecting to find greater soundness among the northern Democrats than among the northern men of the Whig party and prepared in that event to act with the former. These southern Whigs were always prepared to fall back upon a Union movement⁷¹ which

⁷¹ Cabell outlined this attitude: “I am a member of the Southern Whig party. I believe it to be the constitutional party—the true conservative party of the country, opposed to all mere abstractions of the South, and to Sewardism, Greeleyism, Van Burenism, and all the other isms of the North. I feel proud of belonging to that party, because, with few exceptions, the members of it are Union men, and as Union men we might, without surrendering any of our principles, act in harmony with the Union Constitutional party. It would be in accordance with the conservative principles of our party to abandon party names and party organizations to act with any man or set of men who, under a new organization, would contribute to the Constitution and the Union.” *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., 451, 452.

they had come to regard as a southern movement on the true basis, devoid of the sectionalism and of the ultraism that had characterized all previous southern movements and that had made their defeat inevitable.⁷² On the twenty-seventh of April, Stephens stated his views on the requirements of such a new organization. "If the people of this country", he declared, "want a national party to govern it upon national principles, they must have a party based upon sound American constitutional principles—a party which shall drive from its ranks every man tainted with Abolition or 'higher law' heresies—a party formed upon those controlling issues which present the paramount question of the day."⁷³

Even the moderates of this group, represented by Marshall and Gentry, were intent on demanding an understanding with the northern Whigs on the basis of the "finality policy". They rejoiced when the Whig caucus at the opening of Congress, though scantily attended, passed a resolution recognizing the finality of the compromise with but few dissenting votes.⁷⁴ They expressed their satisfaction that the Whig party had placed itself upon the same platform upon which southern Whigs stood. This action seemed to most of them a basis for further cooperation within the party.⁷⁵ But in April, a strategic move on the part of

⁷² *Georgia Journal and Messenger*, April 28, 1852, in Pendleton, *A. H. Stephens*, 118.

⁷³ *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 460.

⁷⁴ *Washington Republic*, Dec. 3; *National Intelligencer*, Dec. 3, 1851; *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., 6-7.

⁷⁵ See *ibid.*, 9. Stephens wrote to his brother, Dec. 10, "The Whig party, so-called, put itself right in caucus. That was a great point. But there will be no National Whig Convention. And I trust there will be no Whig organization kept up. The true men must get together and act together without any regard to past party names." *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*.

the Democrats again summoned the southern Whigs to action. Two Georgia Democrats, Jackson and Hill-
 yer, who aimed at making a Democratic demonstration
 which would prove the soundness of northern Demo-
 crats,⁷⁶ introduced resolutions affirming the finality of
 the compromise measures. As was intended, they thus
 called the attention of the Union Whigs of the South
 to the relative unsoundness of their own political asso-
 ciates in the North. For the votes on the resolutions
 revealed two-thirds of the northern Whigs opposed to
 such a declaration, while two-thirds of the northern
 Democrats voted in the affirmative." The Whig rep-
 resentatives of the South saw the force of the argu-
 ment. "That vote left to me, and to other Whigs
 from the slaveholding States", said Humphrey Mar-
 shall somewhat later, "no evidence whatever that a
 faithful adherence to the compromise, and a determina-
 tion to proclaim the principles and the laws thereby
 established as a final settlement of sectional and dis-
 turbing elements, would henceforth be considered as
 part 'of the Whig creed'. That vote exhibited nearly
 the whole Southern Whig party in one direction, and
 nearly the whole Northern Whig party in another line.
 In other words it *indicated a rupture*, or the necessity
 of '*agreeing to disagree*', on an important question
 affecting the welfare, possibly the very existence of
 the Union."⁷⁸

This impression was reenforced not only by the de-
 cided stand of Greeley's New York *Tribune* and of the
 other anti-slavery Whig journals, that there could be

⁷⁶ Hopkins Holsey to Cobb, Feb. 6, 1852, *ibid.*

⁷⁷ *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., 980, 982, 983.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, Appendix, 634.

and need be no agreement between the two wings on the slavery question, that the best arrangement was to "agree to disagree",⁷⁹ but also by the growing strength of Scott in the North. The situation was carefully canvassed by the southern Whigs. They remained firm in their insistence on a compromise basis for cooperation between the sectional wings of the party. They saw that it was again necessary to put the party to the test at the very first opportunity which offered itself. Hence they decided to raise the issue in the congressional caucus which had just been called "to consider matters of importance to the Whig party",⁸⁰ and which was therefore favorable to the execution of their purposes, though obviously intended to be a meeting to decide upon the time and place for the national convention.

In the first meeting on April 9, Humphrey Marshall, "the leader of the forlorn hope of the South", introduced the compromise resolution that had passed the Whig caucus of the previous December. Gentry, Outlaw, Walsh, Moore, and Cabell supported it, stating that they wanted a definite approval of the fugitive slave law, which but carried out an express provision of the Constitution, that the Whigs of the South would never consent to act in brotherhood with traitors who desired to nullify certain provisions of the Constitution, that the principle of Marshall's resolution was the only basis on which the Whig members of Congress could cooperate since it was essential to a national Whig organization. Northern Whigs replied, but a

⁷⁹ *New York Tribune*, March 15, April 9, 1852.

⁸⁰ *National Intelligencer*, April 9, 1852. Outlaw admitted on June 10 that the southern Whigs had agreed in advance to offer a compromise resolution. *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 677.

resolution to adjourn carried the matter over to the twentieth of the month. Before adjournment, however, Mangum, who had presided over the meeting, informed the body that if he was chairman of the next session, he would rule Marshall's resolution out of order; Marshall indicated his willingness to make a test question out of the point of order.⁸¹

The eleven days which intervened between the sessions of the caucus did not bring any change in the position of the southern Whigs. They were egged on to greater determination in adhering to the course that they had laid out by the arguments of the national Whigs of the North, led by Representative Brooks of New York, who, as the spokesman in Congress of the latter, justly argued that northern men could never fight for the constitutional rights of the South on northern ground if southern men abandoned them in the struggle.⁸² At the adjourned meeting the chairman ruled Marshall's proposition out of order; his ruling was sustained by a vote of 46 to 21.⁸³ Marshall almost immediately declared that the caucus was no place for a Whig and withdrew. Gentry then stated that he would make one more effort to save the unity of the party; he offered a resolution which declared that in fixing the time and place for the national convention, the Whigs did not commit themselves to support the

⁸¹ Proceedings of caucus in *New York Herald*, April 10, 1852. The Washington correspondence of the *Courier and Enquirer*, *Express*, and *Journal of Commerce* giving reports of the caucus is in the *Herald* of April 13. The official report for both sessions of the caucus is in *National Intelligencer*, May 8, 1852.

⁸² *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., 1157; cf. *New York Express*—of which Brooks was editor—April 20; *New York Herald*, April 11, 13, 1852.

⁸³ See official report in *National Intelligencer*, May 8, 1852.

nominees of the convention unless such candidates should be publicly and unequivocally pledged to the finality of the compromise measures. This was also ruled out of order and Mangum was sustained in his decision. Then followed a long debate. The southern Whigs refused to be satisfied with the announcement of the chair that, while Gentry's resolution could not be entertained as an amendment, it might later, after the disposal of the regular business, be entertained as an independent proposition by the meeting organized as a debating society. They feared that after the real work of the caucus was performed, if it did not adjourn, the northern members would either retire or be "present with a mental reservation"; that the history of the December caucus would be repeated with perhaps a compromise resolution which would not commit the northern members.⁸⁴ Cullom of Tennessee promised to offer such a resolution at that time and urged Gentry to remain in the caucus. But one by one the southerners made personal explanations, declaring that the rejection of the compromise resolutions was the same as thrusting them out, and left the meeting. At length only thirteen southern Whigs remained; some of them declared that they strongly sympathized with the seceders and that they stayed only because they hoped the Whig convention would endorse the compromise. When the excitement subsided somewhat, this rump caucus selected Baltimore as the place for the holding of the national convention on June 16, and the debate was renewed to continue until nearly midnight.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ See Outlaw's speech on June 10, *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 677.

⁸⁵ Cf. *Philadelphia North American*, April 21; *New York Herald*,

The action of the seceders had an important influence on the position of the Whig party, especially, of course, in the southern states. The news of these proceedings at Washington reached the lower South just at the time when the Whigs of Alabama and Mississippi had begun seriously to take up the work of reorganization and tended to obstruct that process. Hence the *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, the *Mobile Advertiser*, and the *Huntsville Advocate*, the leading Whig papers of Alabama, regretted the secession of the southern members as ill-advised and unnecessary, while the *Jackson Flag of the Union* expressed but a mild and indirect approval of their course.⁸⁶ The southern Whig journals were divided in their opinion, but the course of the Marshall-Gentry faction and its withdrawal from the caucus were sustained by a considerable majority of them.⁸⁷ The discussion brought from all southern Whigs a renewal of the demand that the national convention pass a satisfactory resolution ratifying the finality of the compromise.⁸⁸ Moreover, a protest

April 21; *Baltimore Sun*, April 21, 1852; *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 622.

It was a stormy night, one continuous outpouring of wind and rain—"the fierce and boisterous concentration of the collected elements of a three days' Nor'easter". Inside the Senate chamber another storm was raging: "The great Whig party was struck amidships, between wind and water, and now threatens, under the first popular breeze, to go down with all on board." *New York Herald*, April 22, 1852.

⁸⁶ *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, April 27, May 5; *Huntsville Advocate*, in *id.*, May 10; *Mobile Advertiser*, May 29; *Jackson Flag of the Union*, May 7, 1852.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Nashville Republican Banner*, April 28, May 8; *Jackson Flag of the Union*, May 7; *New Orleans Bulletin*, April 20, 23, 26, 30, May 4; *Memphis Eagle and Enquirer*, May 5; *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, April 27, May 4; *Savannah Republican*, April 27; *Washington Union*, April 27, 30, 1852.

The *Louisville Journal* and other Scott papers strongly condemned the course of the seceders.

⁸⁸ See *New Orleans Bulletin*, April 26; *Franklin Home Press*, in *Nashville Republican Banner*, May 8, 1852.

against the action of the caucus which sought to justify the course they had taken and which showed the extent of the rupture, was drawn up by the seceders, addressed to the Whigs of the United States, and published generally by the Whig press.⁸⁹ The proceedings of the caucus became the subject of many warm debates in Congress, which naturally stirred up considerable ill-feeling between the two groups of southern Whigs.⁹⁰ The *Washington Union* in commenting on the situation called it the dissolution of the Whig party.⁹¹ Disaffected southern Whigs and national Whigs of the North made it the occasion for urging the necessity of a third party organization.⁹² Immediately after the caucus Senator Dawson sent a despatch to the Georgia Constitutional Union convention which was then considering the question of representation at the national conventions: "Breach wide and deep. Let the Constitutional Union party be firm, and the South will be safe. Avoid both Whig and Democratic conventions and the conservatives of all parties will rally with one party, and call a convention at Washington."⁹³

The Georgia convention accordingly postponed definite action until the work of the parties in their national conventions could be compared. A supplementary meeting of the Union Democrats, however, at once took steps toward sending delegates to the Baltimore

⁸⁹ *National Intelligencer*, April 29; *Washington Union*, April 29, 1852.

⁹⁰ *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., 1156-1159, 1379-1388; etc.

⁹¹ *Washington Union*, April 25, 1852.

⁹² *New York Herald*, April 22, etc., 1852.

⁹³ *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, April 27, 1852. Stanly said on June 12 that Abercrombie sent the same despatch simultaneously to the Alabama Union party. *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 690.

Democratic convention.⁹⁴ Most Georgia Whigs, however, refused to be transferred to the Democratic party by their Union Democrat colleagues.⁹⁵ Their response to the call upon their old party allegiance came at the eleventh hour when, on June 7, with the national convention only a trifle over a week distant, a Fillmore state convention was held at Savannah which provided for representation in the Whig national convention.⁹⁶ In Alabama and Mississippi, too, the Whigs argued that the preparations of the Union Democrats for representation in the national convention of their party had dissolved the Union organization there and left the Whig party as the legitimate Union party in those states.⁹⁷ The Whigs of Mississippi recovered first and held a state convention on the third of May in which they provided for representation at Baltimore in the interests of Fillmore.⁹⁸ The process of recovery was so slow in Alabama that the Whigs feared that there would be no time for a state convention. Accordingly, district meetings selected delegates to be sent to Baltimore, but preparations for representation were completed at a state convention on June 10.⁹⁹ On the same day the representatives of the little band of South Carolina Whigs undertook a similar task in order to give their state a voice in the national convention.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ *Savannah Republican*, April 23, 26; *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, April 27, 1852.

⁹⁵ *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, April 27, 1852.

⁹⁶ *Savannah Republican*, June 8, 1852.

⁹⁷ *Mobile Advertiser*, April 21, 28; *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, April 24, 28, May 11; *Jackson Flag of the Union*, April 3, 23, 30; *Natchez Courier*, April 20, 1852.

⁹⁸ *Jackson Flag of the Union*, May 7, 1852.

⁹⁹ *Mobile Advertiser*, May 2, 12, June 16, 1852.

¹⁰⁰ *Washington Republic*, June 15; *National Intelligencer*, June 12, 15, 1852.

One of the strong arguments in favor of representation was that if the southern Whigs united in a body in support of Fillmore they might be able to secure his nomination with the help of the national Whigs of the North. This would preserve the national character of the Whig party. A full representation was therefore urged as essential. "The truth is", said Hilliard, who was very active in urging the representation of Alabama on such grounds, that "the only place where we can serve our country, by helping to give it a sound administration, is the Whig convention".¹⁰¹ But the southern Whigs laid down definite terms for the participation of their delegates in the convention. These delegates were urged and sometimes formally instructed to insist at the start on the adoption of a resolution committing the nominee to an unequivocal acceptance of the compromise of 1850; if this was refused, the southern members were to withdraw from the convention in a body.¹⁰² The Tennessee state convention expressed its confidence that the convention would nominate only sound candidates; this was rigorously insisted on by the Whigs of the other states as they took formal action.

Less and less was said against Scott. He had consistently refused to come out with an unequivocal expression of his position on the compromise such as would have satisfied most southern Whigs.¹⁰³ But his friends were allowed to make some indirect assurances.

¹⁰¹ Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, May 11, 1852.

¹⁰² Cf. Raleigh *Star*, May 19; Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, May 18; Mobile *Advertiser*, June 1, 10, 1852.

¹⁰³ The Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, May 11, 1852, speaking for a number of Georgia Whigs, refused to be satisfied with any letter at this stage. See also Savannah *Republican*, May 17, 1852.

In a letter dated May 3, Botts told the Virginia Whigs—and incidentally those of the whole South—how Scott had unburdened himself to him on that day, and how the General regretted that his position made it impossible for him to make an authoritative announcement. Botts was convinced that Scott was for the compromise in all its parts and that a safer and sounder man could not be found.¹⁰⁴ White of Kentucky declared before Congress on the eighth of April that he could testify to Scott's soundness and that he believed himself authorized to say on behalf of General Scott, that he was opposed to the alteration of any of the compromise measures. He later explained that this statement was based on frequent conversations with Scott and declared that the latter had confirmed his statement in more recent interviews.¹⁰⁵ But many demanded a more open avowal emanating from the candidate himself. Accordingly, the editor of the Georgetown, Kentucky, *Herald* was allowed to read a letter which, it was alleged, Scott had written to a prominent local Whig. In this letter Scott promised that, should the Whig national convention "call for my views on the leading questions of the day, they will be promptly and most explicitly given in writing".¹⁰⁶ Still later came the rumor from Washington that Scott had given the definite assurances which were desired in an interview with several members of the Maryland Whig convention.¹⁰⁷

These statements proved acceptable to a large ele-

¹⁰⁴ *Richmond Whig*, May 11, 1852.

¹⁰⁵ *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 422, 638.

¹⁰⁶ *Nashville Republican Banner*, May 19, 1852.

¹⁰⁷ *Memphis Eagle and Enquirer*, May 27, 1852.

ment of the party in the South, although many Fillmore and Webster men continued to assail Scott for his deplorable lack of real openheartedness. Moreover, it is to be noted that the resolutions of the state conventions, in anticipation of Scott's selection at Baltimore, without an exception left a loop-hole for the support of any candidate "unequivocally in favor" or "known to be in favor" of sustaining the compromise measures.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ELECTION OF 1852.

The Whig national convention convened at Baltimore on June 16. The southern delegates arrived on the ground early, after a series of conferences at Washington where many of them had stopped to survey the situation. They were prepared to carry out the program which they had planned. On the evening of the fifteenth and on the following morning, a caucus of southern delegates, over which John G. Chapman of Maryland presided, agreed upon a series of resolutions, the adoption of which in a platform for the Whig party was to be made the condition of their continued participation in the deliberations of the convention.¹

The contest with the northern Whigs was begun somewhat inauspiciously, for the southerners failed to secure a temporary chairman of their own choice, although they tried, with this very object, to forestall the northern delegates by calling the meeting to order a quarter of an hour before the appointed time.² The

¹ *National Intelligencer*, June 17; *New York Herald*, June 17 (all dates are of 1852 unless otherwise indicated). The authorship of these resolutions has been ascribed to Webster or his friends. Stephens, *Constitutional View*, II, 237-238. At the time, however, they were regarded as of southern Whig origin and were believed to be the work of Humphrey Marshall. See *Philadelphia North American*, June 17; *Louisville Journal*, July 2, citing *New York Express*. Etheridge, a Tennessee Whig, stated definitely before the House, May 17, 1854, that the finality resolution "was penned by a southern gentleman (Mr. Humphrey Marshall, of Kentucky)". *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 835.

² *New York Herald*, June 17.

permanent organization of the convention, however, placed Chapman in the chair after the Scott men had in vain rallied all their strength in committee on John M. Clayton of Delaware. On the second day, after the preliminary matters had been disposed of, Duncan of Louisiana moved that a committee on resolutions consisting of one member from each state should be appointed by the respective delegations and that the convention should not proceed to ballot upon candidates until the platform reported by the committee should have been passed upon. This called out objections from the northern members. Duncan replied: "Gentlemen, we want to know, in all honor and candor, who you are. We want you to show us your hands, and we are prepared to show you ours. We want to know if our principles are your principles and your principles ours. If they are not, and your principles and doctrines are different from ours, it is better we should all know it at once. . . . We desire to know . . . whether or not we can agree upon a platform, broad and strong enough to insure the union and success of the Whig party in the whole Union."³ The second part of his motion, however, he withdrew at the request of other southern delegates, who considered it premature. Jessup of Pennsylvania next tried to amend the resolution that the committee should consist of one member from each state by providing that each member should be authorized to cast as many votes as his state had in the electoral college. This called forth from Senator Dawson of Georgia, after the amendment had secured a majority of five on a test vote and had been renewed

³ New York *Herald*, June 18; cf. *National Intelligencer* and Philadelphia *North American*, of same date.

by Jessup, a protest not so much in behalf of his section as of the small states on the basis of their sovereignty: "The attempt is made to connect this convention with the wildest sort of democracy—the democracy of numbers. For the first time the large States presume to control the sovereignty of the States. The principle contended for will uproot your constitution and the sovereign character of the States will be prostituted to numbers." Had the Whig party departed so far from its conservative principles as to introduce and uphold this dangerous innovation? It was, moreover, "the wildest effort that was ever made to alienate one section from another. . . . Whenever the party abandons those great principles, so help me God, I will abandon it".⁴ The question was fortunately not put to the test, for Jessup withdrew his amendment and the Duncan resolutions passed with slight amendment. This secured a committee favorable to the cause of the southerners, with Ashmun of Massachusetts, one of Webster's managers and a thorough compromise man, as chairman.

To this committee were referred the resolutions adopted by the southern delegates. Among others that were suggested was one by Davis of Florida declaring that the Whig delegates would not support a candidate who had, "by his public acts and recorded opinions, left anything to be misunderstood as to his opinion on the compromise question". Although later withdrawn at the suggestion of Cabell, the mere introduction of this resolution, coupled with the express intention of the southern delegates to withdraw and to form a

⁴ *New York Herald*, June 18; *Philadelphia North American*, June 18; *National Intelligencer*, June 19.

separate organization, probably in alliance with the Webster men, if a platform endorsing the finality of the compromise was not adopted before the nominations, was enough to show the temper of the former. Meanwhile the committee on credentials reported and the compromise men scored another victory when the Fillmore delegates were admitted to contested seats. In the evening session on Friday, Ashmun, for the committee on resolutions, reported the platform substantially as agreed upon in the southern caucus. This was followed by Choate's famous appeal for the support of the resolutions and for the choice of a candidate who stood for them rather than of one whose supporters had no pledges but "in breeches pockets". This statement elicited a reply from John M. Botts, who, after denying that any one had a letter from Scott in his pocket, drew one from his own which he proceeded to read. It was addressed by Scott to Senator Archer of Virginia, and stated that while he would write nothing to the convention, he should, if nominated, give in his letter of acceptance a complete endorsement of the compromise measures.⁵ The conditions under which the letter was produced furnished considerable amusement for the convention. But the seriousness of the struggle that followed changed the situation into one of intense excitement. Botts closed his remarks by moving the previous question on the adoption of the resolutions. This led to a running debate amid great confusion. The northern delegates, who interpreted this move as a gag to stifle debate and to take away all chance of resistance, demanded their rights.⁶ But the

⁵ Scott to Wm. S. Archer, June 15, in *National Intelligencer*, June 21.

⁶ Pike, *First Blows of the Civil War*, 152.

question of the merits of the resolutions was thus avoided. Botts and the moderates who were directing these tactics successfully prevented a protracted debate which would have allowed the hot-spurs of the two extreme wings to work themselves into a passion that might have endangered harmonious cooperation in the convention and perhaps have led to a split. With the assistance of the officers of the convention, the final vote was taken and the platform containing the finality resolution was adopted, 227 to 66. All the nays were given by supporters of Scott from the North.

Then began the balloting for a presidential candidate. The first ballot gave Fillmore 133, Scott 131, and Webster 29, with 147 necessary for a choice. None of Webster's votes came from the South; on the other hand, all but 16 of Fillmore's were given by southern delegates, of whom Botts alone supported Scott. It is clear that the Fillmore and Webster men could at any time have nominated a candidate in opposition to Scott had they been able to unite on one. This seemed, to men who had no inside knowledge regarding the situation, to be the inevitable result of the convention. But when it adjourned over Sunday after a number of fruitless ballots the situation was substantially the same as at the beginning. It was anticipated that this adjournment would give the supporters of Webster and Fillmore the opportunity to get together and to concentrate their votes on a single candidate.⁷ This is exactly what was attempted, but failed because of the fact that too many Webster delegates were either "bitter-enders" or men who preferred Scott to Fillmore,⁸ and because, among the southern Fillmore sup-

⁷ New York *Herald*, June 21.

⁸ See Van Tyne, *Letters of Webster*, 525, 529.

porters, there were certain delegates who would have gone to the support of Scott as soon as their own choice seemed about to be abandoned. This became evident on Sunday, when, after the Webster delegates proved obdurate, the attempt was made to rally the Fillmore men upon the northern compromise candidate—a movement which the president had made possible by secretly placing a letter of withdrawal in the hands of a delegate from the Buffalo district of New York with full authority to use it whenever it should be deemed proper.⁹ It was found, however, that from fifteen to twenty or more delegates from Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Missouri had decided to go for Scott when their comrades were transferred to Webster, while the Webster workers were unable to produce satisfactory evidence that he would have sufficient support in the North to secure the nomination.¹⁰ Under the circumstances the southern men could only hold fast to Fillmore.

The situation was decidedly in favor of Scott's receiving the votes of enough southern delegates to obtain the nomination. Certain forces had for some time been at work to make a small group favorable to such action. As would have been expected, some southerners shared the belief that Scott was the only candidate whose availability gave him the chance of success in the election. The gradual moderation of the anti-slavery activity of the northern Whigs had also in all probability been brought to their notice. On the other hand, they came to regard the activity

⁹ Fillmore to National Whig Convention, June 10. See his letter to Geo. R. Babcock, Buffalo Hist. Soc., *Pubs.*, XI, 324-330; also Philadelphia *North American*, June 21.

¹⁰ Brown, *Life of Choate*, I, 180-181.

of the Marshall-Gentry faction as entirely too intemperate. These men, who had become more and more violent in their denunciation of Scott and the northern Whigs, had aired family quarrels before Congress and bitterly denounced those who differed with them; even those southern members who attempted to justify their action in remaining in the congressional caucus were charged with inclining to the support of Scott.¹¹ Not only did they denounce the conditions of Scott's candidature and the character of his supporters but Gentry even made bold in a speech in Congress two days before the opening of the convention to question Scott's advantages on the score of availability, on the ground that he had not "in his personal character, those attributes and qualities which make the people love him as they loved Jackson, Harrison, and Taylor". He went further and declared that the Whig party could not nationalize itself by passing compromise resolutions at Baltimore and then nominating Scott; he boldly announced that, if the party failed to submit to the process of nationalization, he was prepared to do his utmost to destroy it.¹² Such tactics as the Fillmore irreconcilables were resorting to, in denouncing the candidate who had the best chances of securing the nomination and whom they might be called upon to support, were considered as entirely lacking in propriety. Senator Jones of Tennessee was early convinced, as he told a Webster worker in New York, that the inconsiderate course of such friends as Marshall and Cabell must lead to the defeat of Fillmore's nomination.¹³

¹¹ *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 629.

¹² *Ibid.*, 709-711.

¹³ Van Tyne, *Letters of Webster*, 519.

It was early anticipated that Scott would be successful with the assistance of southern votes. "The Scott men are very confident", Toombs wrote on May 27, "but I do not think much of their skill and tactics. It is certain that quite a number of the pretended friends of Fillmore in Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia are really for Scott and will back him if they dare to do it".¹⁴ Letters from Scott were secretly used to bring about this result. It was rumored as early as June 11 that such letters were being shown to southern delegates in Washington to prove his soundness.¹⁵ The New York *Courier and Inquirer*, a Webster organ, noting these rumors, berated southern men who would be willing to sell their birthright for a mess of pottage, and urged them to stick to the compromise and to the compromise candidates. "If you lift a finger to take Mr. Seward's candidate and give our man the go-by, then understand plainly that we compromise Whigs will join in with Mr. Seward and help him during the next four years to 'give you Jesse'." ¹⁶ Such a threat could have no healthy influence on men from the upper South who were already counted upon to reenforce the Scott men. Next the Archer letter, though clearly not intended for the public eye, was produced and shown to the Virginia and other southern delegates.¹⁷ Conditions at this point were favorable to an arrangement which would ensure Scott's success. A little group of southerners composed of Clayton, Botts, Jones, Reverdy Johnson, and others worked zealously

¹⁴ *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*; see also T. D. Harris to Cobb, April 21, 1852, *ibid.*; *Washington Union*, May 4.

¹⁵ *Savannah Republican*, June 11.

¹⁶ *Washington Union*, June 13.

¹⁷ *Baltimore Patriot*, June 15.

in his interest. Botts had directed affairs among the southern delegates first at Washington and later at Baltimore, making a wise use of the Archer letter, and now had the situation well in hand. Acting as the medium between the Scott and the Fillmore men, he seems to have brought about a tacit understanding which assured Scott the vote of enough southerners at the proper moment to secure the nomination, in return for which a sufficient number of the northern friends of the general were to assist in the adoption of the southern platform.¹⁸ Under some such arrangement the desired resolutions were adopted and the southern delegates were called upon to fulfill their obligations. Thus far the southern men had won almost unexpected victories in regard to committees, platform, and credentials. These victories were regarded as the result of concessions on the part of Scott men and were in general conducive to greater harmony among the delegates from the two sections besides being favorable to Scott's nomination.¹⁹ Certain southerners felt that they could afford to be generous. The Montgomery *Alabama Journal*, whose editor was a prominent delegate at the convention, announced: "Let the nomination therefore be who it may, the principles contended for are vindicated and established."²⁰ Said the New York *Herald*, the voting on Saturday from the seventh to

¹⁸ New York *Herald*, June 18. Henry J. Raymond telegraphed to his paper, the New York *Times*, which published the despatch on June 19: "Tomorrow, it is believed, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and one or two others will give Scott the nomination on the third or fourth ballot. The northern Whigs gave way on the platform with this understanding. If Scott is not nominated they will charge breach of faith on the South."

¹⁹ New York *Herald*, June 19, Washington Correspondence of June 18.

²⁰ June 21.

the forty-sixth ballot without any substantial change "was only an indication of the fear on the part of Fillmore and Webster men, to venture a change from one to the other".²¹ Sunday brought the definite failure of the attempts at uniting the compromise forces on a single candidate and with it the announcement that the morrow would witness the nomination of Scott with southern support to the number of twenty votes if necessary.²²

The first part of Monday's session was taken up with a consideration of the despatch that Henry J. Raymond, editor of the *New York Times*, had sent to his paper in which he reported an understanding between the northern and southern delegates and asserted that the latter would be open to the charge of breach of faith if they forced the defeat of Scott's nomination. Renneau of Georgia resented this charge of a "corrupt bargain" as applied to the delegates from his section and introduced resolutions ordering Raymond's expulsion. A long debate ensued. A motion to lay this resolution on the table was at first defeated but when the question was put, after Raymond had had an opportunity of offering an explanation, he was acquitted by the convention. His speech made it clear that his report had made no reference to a formal bargain between the delegates of the two sections: "I asserted then, and I assert now, that in giving away as they [the northern delegates] did, upon the platform—in conceding, as they did to their brethren of the South,

²¹ *New York Herald*, June 21.

²² *New York Herald*, June 21. On Sunday the Tennessee delegation sent ex-Governor Jones to Washington and he returned bearing a pledge from Scott entirely satisfactory and covering every possible ground of objection. *Washington Union*, July 27.

an important position, . . . the northern Whigs did it in the belief, and with the expectation, that they would be met in a similar spirit of concession and coalition by the Whigs of the South." He referred to the fact that the South had carried every vote but one against the North, that the whole business of the convention had been planned and its whole character shaped by a majority of states instead of a majority of numbers. He pointed to the fact that the northern men had shown their strength by carrying Jessup's amendment, which would have secured the advantage for a majority of numbers, and then had voluntarily withdrawn it and receded from their position. "If after having done all this for the sake of promoting harmony in the party and securing to it unity of feeling and of action, you of the South had not met them in a similar spirit, and conceded to them the poor boon of a candidate of their choice, I tell you now that you would have been exposed to the charge of bad faith." ²³

The pointedness of the argument, together with the earnestness and the frankness of the speaker, had its effect upon the convention. The southerners did not desire to appear altogether devoid of a sense of gratitude and of the spirit of compromise, especially as they had no hope for their own candidate. The balloting was resumed. It was simply a question of who would deliver up Fillmore and when it would be done. The fiftieth ballot brought important gains for Scott; the fifty-third gave him the nomination with 159 votes, as against Fillmore's 112 and Webster's 21. Virginia contributed eight, Tennessee and Missouri each three for the winning candidate.

²³ Maverick, *Henry J. Raymond and the New York Press*, 134, 135.

The attitude of the southern delegates toward the nomination is worthy of note:

Amid the intense excitement and cheering a resolution was offered by a delegate from Alabama to declare the nomination unanimous.

Alabama and other delegates from the South, have stated that the adoption of the platform removed their instructions to vote against Scott.

Mr. Jones, of Tennessee, read a letter from Scott dated yesterday, saying:—

“Having the honor to be a candidate of the Whig Convention, I will accept the nomination, if tendered to me, with the platform laid down by the convention.”

Louisiana then pledged herself to the nominee.

North Carolina came in unanimously.

Mr. Grantland, of Georgia, announced Georgia for the nominee.

Mr. Bryan of S. C. responded on behalf of the delegation of that State that General Scott had endorsed the platform, and South Carolina endorses Scott.

The Chairman of the Alabama Delegation left his delegation to answer for themselves.

Mississippi responded heartily in favor of the nominee.

Georgia, through Mr. Dawson, responded, and promised that the Whigs of Georgia would accept Scott on the Whig platform, and would do their best to elect him.

The responses from the South caused considerable enthusiasm, and as each State responded, hearty cheers were given.²⁴

²⁴ New York *Herald*, June 22. Cf. report in Philadelphia *North American*, June 22.

The body of the southern delegates had supported Fillmore to the end with dogged determination: great was their disappointment when he failed to secure the nomination. Webster, however, their second choice, failed to secure a single vote from the representatives of the slave states. To the aged statesman this was a source of bitter disappointment.²⁵ No one, however, regretted it more than the southern delegates themselves, for upon the records of the convention there was not a sign of their real sentiments. The Mississippi delegation before returning to their homes called on Webster to express their admiration for him and their regret that conditions had prevented them from giving him their votes. They explained that, had it not been for the fear that the abandonment of Fillmore would be the signal for some of the southern delegates to break for Scott, they would gladly have come to his support. As it was, they almost regretted that they had not done so regardless of consequences and thus taken the chance to set both Webster and themselves aright before the nation.²⁶ A large number of the southern Whigs in Congress tried to do this for themselves and their constituents and so, less than a week after the convention, Webster was invited to a public dinner which might give them an opportunity to show their appreciation and devotion.²⁷ Webster accepted the honor but no day was named and the event never took place.

When Scott came to write his letter of acceptance of the Whig nomination he found himself between the

²⁵ Van Tyne, *Letters of Webster*, 531-532.

²⁶ *National Intelligencer*, June 25; cf. Curtis, *Life of Webster*, II, 622-623.

²⁷ *National Intelligencer*, June 30.

Scylla of northern anti-slavery fanaticism and the Charybdis of southern insistence upon the finality of the existing guarantees of slavery. Previous to his nomination, his northern managers had secured from him the promise of a letter that would neutralize the effect of the obnoxious platform in the North, and both Seward and Greeley, and perhaps others, had tried to draft a satisfactory letter for him. One was actually agreed upon which was ready to be promulgated upon the announcement of his nomination.²⁸ But before that time arrived Scott was subjected to new pressure from the opposite side. Not only had the Archer letter been secured from him to influence the southern delegates, but on Sunday, June 21, Senator Jones, who had gone to Washington as the representative of the Tennessee delegation to confer with Scott, was given a pledge that was intended to satisfy the southern delegates.²⁹ This was the letter read by Jones the next day, after the nomination had been made,³⁰ and by it Scott was definitely committed to the acceptance of the platform. But it was necessary for him to do more than this to satisfy the southern irreconcilables, those who in their devotion to the conservative interests of their section had from the beginning to the end condemned the circumstances of his candidature. Stephens tells us that he at once sent Scott a message urging an unequivocal endorsement of the platform and promising his support in that event.³¹ But Scott could not go too far, although

²⁸ Pike, *First Blows of the Civil War*, 139-142.

²⁹ *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 6; *Washington Union*, July 27.

³⁰ *New York Herald*, June 22; *Philadelphia North American*, June 22; *Washington Republic*, June 22. Some reports give this as a telegraphic despatch, which circumstantial and internal evidence proves impossible. See *National Intelligencer*, June 22.

³¹ *Avary, Recollections of A. H. Stephens*, 28.

his personal predilections were in full sympathy with the platform.³² His formal letter of acceptance as it appeared on June 29 merely accepted the nomination "with the resolutions annexed".³³

This letter was preceded by an announcement from Seward that he would accept no "public station or preferment whatever" from Scott in the event of his election.³⁴ This was intended to calm the minds of those who feared that Seward, as the holder of an important cabinet position, would direct the affairs of the administration. Such an assurance, however, was not enough for Stephens and Toombs and those who had in dismay beheld Seward working his way into the confidence of President Taylor, who had been regarded as peculiarly a southern candidate; they remembered that the New York senator had within a short time become the power behind the throne, controlling not only appointments, but, to an extent, even the executive policy. None of these were satisfied that things could be any better if Seward's own candidate should be elected. Accordingly, on the fifth of July, a "card" appeared bearing the signatures of nine former southern Whigs, most of whom had not intended to support Scott in any event. In this manifesto they made a joint statement of their position, announcing their refusal to support him and assigning several reasons therefor: that "he obstinately refused up to the time of his nomination, to give any public opinion in favor of the compromise"; that "his letter of acceptance does not give them [the compromise measures] the approval of his judgment";

³² Cf. Greeley, *Recollections of a Busy Life*, 279.

³³ *National Intelligencer*, June 29; *Washington Republic*, June 29.

³⁴ Seward to James B. Taylor, June 26, *Washington Union*, July 1.

that "amongst the 'known incidents' of his life there is not one . . . in favor of the principles of the compromise"; and, finally, that he was considered as "the favorite candidate of the *Free-soil* wing of the Whig party" and hence would be partial to it if elected. The signers were Stephens, Toombs, and James Johnson of Georgia, White and Abercrombie of Alabama, Brooke of Mississippi, and Faulkner of Virginia, besides Gentry and Williams of Tennessee, who appended their concurrence for part of the reasons assigned.⁸⁵ Humphrey Marshall, on the other hand, was reported as reconciled to Scott's nomination upon the Baltimore platform, while Cabell and Morton of Florida, and Caldwell and Outlaw of North Carolina, tried to endure their disappointment in silence. Clingman, however, made open preparations to join the Democrats in support of their nominees, Pierce and King. But the importance of the manifesto was easily discredited by orthodox Whigs in the South, inasmuch as it could be shown that none of the signers of the main document had been elected to Congress as Whigs proper and that few of them had been attending the party caucuses.⁸⁶ They had, moreover, opposed the Whig convention from the beginning and had in advance repudiated its authority. Since it was hardly expected that they would support Scott under any conditions, their advice could scarcely carry much weight.

⁸⁵ *National Intelligencer*, July 5.

⁸⁶ Later in the canvass a card appeared, signed by Truman Smith and a number of other prominent Whigs, assigning a series of reasons why they could not support the Democratic ticket. It was a humorous attempt to counteract the effect of the original address, the inference being that these men were as much Democrats as the signers of the "southern Whig" card were real Whigs. *Washington Union*, Aug. 28, 29, 31; *Washington Republic*, Aug. 14.

Scott's nomination was received in the South with mingled expressions of satisfaction and disappointment. Here and there it elicited a faint outburst of enthusiasm, but the attitude of the Whigs generally was one of coldness or of studied resignation. But the events of the canvass which followed the Whig national convention of 1852 demonstrated the soundness of the assertion previously made in Congress by Outlaw of North Carolina, that "party ties are among the strongest associations which bind men together", that "the very name of party has a talismanic power on the passions and prejudices of the people".⁸⁷ At once a tremendous reaction began in favor of Scott that swept through the states of the upper South. Most of the Whigs there were willing to take his prompt acceptance of the platform as conclusive proof that "the old soldier is entirely released from the shackles of Seward and Company."⁸⁸

In the lower tier of states, however, from North Carolina to Alabama and Mississippi, there was a serious and wide-spread disaffection that greatly endangered Scott's cause in the South. There the Whigs had not fully recovered from their recent disorganization and had been in doubt as to what course to pursue up to the very eve of the convention; many members had been lost by desertion to the Democratic party in the break-up of the Union organizations in 1851, and others were about to follow suit. But only in Georgia was the sentiment against Scott strong enough to

⁸⁷ *Cong. Globe*, 32 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 678.

⁸⁸ *New York Herald*, June 23, Washington Correspondence, June 21. See editorials cited in the *Washington Republic*, June 25, 26, 29, July 9; *Nashville Republican Banner*, June 23, 28. "Scott's letter is all his friends could desire, and a great deal more than his enemies can digest." *Richmond Whig*, June 30.

threaten a serious third party or an independent Whig movement. In North Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi a large majority of the Whig party organs at once took up the General's cause. They frankly admitted that Scott was not their first choice, but, stated the *Mobile Advertiser*, "it is due to ourselves and to him to say that our preference for another was not attributable to distrust of him".³⁹ They even asserted that they had never doubted or questioned his soundness on all questions relating to the constitutional rights of the South, of which they had conclusive personal knowledge.⁴⁰ "The Whig convention", commented the *Jackson Flag of the Union* on June 25, "as a preliminary step, and *before* the name of any gentleman was submitted, adopted calmly and deliberately, a platform embracing the Compromise as a settlement. . . . On this firm foundation our candidates now stand as the conservators of the public tranquillity; and the veteran Chief, who never skulked from an enemy or wrapped an opinion in equivocation, stands before the country pledged to sustain those measures of pacification which have been endorsed and ratified by the National Whig Convention." Scott's letter was hailed by them as an open, straightforward, and candid avowal of his sentiments, by which he planted himself on the broad platform of the constitution and union.⁴¹

On the other hand, Scott's nomination proved a bitter pill to many old and staunch Whigs. Prominent men from all parts of the South were included in the ranks of the disaffected. Besides those members of Congress whose course has been referred to, W. D.

³⁹ June 23.

⁴⁰ *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, June 23.

⁴¹ *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, July 7; *Mobile Advertiser*, July 7.

Merrick and John Henderson, former Whig senators from Maryland and Mississippi respectively, Daniel Jenifer of Maryland, James Lyons of Virginia, Kenneth Rayner of North Carolina, Waddy Thompson of South Carolina, and Parson Brownlow, the spirited Whig editor in Tennessee, were among the more prominent of those who repudiated the Whig nominee. One of the electors in Tennessee and two in Louisiana refused to act after Scott's nomination and had to be replaced by loyal men.⁴²

No less than five Alabama Whig papers refused at the outset to support the Whig national ticket, although they were overwhelmingly overbalanced in numbers and influence by the Scott press. In North Carolina, the *Wilmington Commercial* and the *Asheville News* rejected Scott; the *News* shortly turned to the support of the Democratic ticket. "A second Washington was repudiated in the person of Fillmore", declared the *Commercial*,⁴³ and it acted as the organ of an abortive independent movement in favor of Webster and Jenkins. The bolters pronounced the inglorious end of the Whig party and formed an organization which they termed "National Republican".⁴⁴ The number of those, however, who took an active part gradually diminished until it was finally necessary to dissolve the organization, leaving the members at full liberty to pursue whatever course they chose.⁴⁵

In Georgia, conditions were much more serious. Stephens and Toombs had telegraphed home the news

⁴² *Nashville Republican Banner*, July 7; *New Orleans Bulletin*, July 30, Aug. 2.

⁴³ *Wilmington Commercial*, July 29.

⁴⁴ *Id.*, Aug. 10, 26, 31, Sept. 2, Oct. 5.

⁴⁵ *Id.*, Oct. 14.

of Scott's nomination and had advised against his support by the Constitutional Union party. The organs of that party concurred in this repudiation of the Whig candidate.⁴⁶ It was believed that Scott's nomination meant the triumph of Seward and the free-soilers.⁴⁷ Many Whigs, however, refused to follow this lead and defended Scott from the charges brought against him. This wing was led by Senator Dawson, who had pledged himself at the national convention to attempt to carry Georgia for the nominee, and by Judge Fleming, who took a prominent part in a ratification meeting at Savannah early in July,⁴⁸ as well as in the later movements of this group. The Union Whigs found themselves unable to agree with the Union Democrats as to the proper course to pursue; when it seemed that the latter were trying not only to thrust Pierce and King down the throats of former Whigs, but to democratize them, the dissolution of the Constitutional Union party, in which they had cooperated, was proclaimed, and most of those of Whig antecedents agreed upon a third-candidate movement—a step which both Stephens and Charles J. Jenkins had recommended at an early date.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Cf. *Savannah Republican*, June 23, 24, 29. The *Macon Citizen* was the only prominent paper supporting Scott.

⁴⁷ *Savannah Republican*, June 29; *Augusta Chronicle*, in *Washington Union*, June 29; Miller, *Bench and Bar of Georgia*, II, 414.

⁴⁸ See his letter in answer to the southern Whig manifesto, *Savannah Republican*, July 10; *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, July 20.

⁴⁹ Stephens to Jas. W. Jones, June 29, *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, July 13; Chas. J. Jenkins to P. W. Alexander, July 1, *Savannah Republican*, July 7. Stephens' influence alone probably prevented Toombs from going over to the Democrats. The *Savannah Republican* announced that the Whigs were divided into "Union Whigs and Southern Rights Whigs, Scott Whigs and anti-Scott Whigs, Pierce Whigs and anti-Pierce Whigs, stand-still Whigs or those who wash their hands of both the candidates and will have nothing to do with either, and *Tertium Quids* or those who go for a third candidate". *National Intelligencer*, July 26.

This newly aroused fear of absorption into the Democracy, "into all the evils of locofocoism",⁵⁰ gave great impetus to the Scott movement and the General's cause made considerable headway for a time. It even came to be hoped that the two Whig groups would agree to unite upon a single candidate when their respective conventions met at Macon on two consecutive days in August.⁵¹ Negotiations to harmonize the action of the two divisions and to effect a reunion were actually carried on, but as these efforts failed, the Scott convention ratified the Baltimore nominations and appointed an electoral ticket, while the independent Whigs, after adopting a platform, nominated Webster and Jenkins as their candidates with a separate set of electors.⁵²

Meantime the canvass had been going on, but it was devoid of much of the interest and enthusiasm of previous campaigns. In many places the Whigs were less than lukewarm. There was little of the usual recognition of military *éclat*, little response to the portrayal of the brilliant career of the hero of Fort George, Chippewa, Niagara, Vera Cruz, Churubusco, Chapultepec, and Mexico. The staple argument against the Whigs in the southern states was naturally the charge that their candidate was unsound. The Democrats had the advantage of knowing the arguments which the southern Whigs had used against Scott prior to his nomination. The leaders were discouraged by the indifference of those Whigs who did not desert. They argued in vain that Pierce was supported by a more formidable

⁵⁰ Savannah Republican, July 20, Aug. 9; Milledgeville Southern Recorder, Aug. 3, 17.

⁵¹ Savannah Republican, Aug. 7, 10.

⁵² Id., Aug. 19, 23; Milledgeville Southern Recorder, Aug. 24, 31; National Intelligencer, Aug. 19, 21.

array of free-soilers than Scott; that Scott, a southern man born and reared in contact with the slave institution, was opposed by a man who at most could only claim to be a northern man with southern principles; that the Whig platform showed greater respect for southern rights than the Democratic platform, even though it had been opposed by a large share of the Scott delegates from the northern states.

The argument that the principles of the party were of greater importance than the candidate, was effectively used to belittle the attacks upon Scott's soundness and to call attention to the satisfactory character of the Whig platform. "The man selected", asserted the *Louisiana Spectator*, "is the mere representative of principles—the mere agent to carry them out into practice."⁵³ The real issue, argued the *Jackson Flag of the Union*, "should be the principles of parties as seen in their platforms. We consider the doctrines constituting the Whig platform, as the great conservative policy of the nation, and we, therefore, advocate the election of General Scott, because we believe he will administer the affairs of government in accordance with the platform laid down".⁵⁴ "Are we not for the sake of our principles compelled to support him?" asked C. C. Langdon, of the *Mobile Advertiser*. "We support the *principles* of our party—those principles for which all good Whigs have labored—and not the *man*. We vote for the *man* to secure a triumph of our *cause*."⁵⁵ The southern democracy was attacked not only as the traditional enemy of the Whigs but also, in

⁵³ *Jackson Flag of the Union*, July 16; see also *Nashville Republican Banner*, June 23.

⁵⁴ Sept. 24.

⁵⁵ July 10.

the lower South, as the secession party, composed of the advocates of extreme state rights views and disunion sentiments, which were inconsistent with true conservatism.⁵⁶ Such principles were enough to keep the conservatives loyal to the Whig party.

Every effort, however, was made to clear up all doubt as to Scott's soundness. The Mississippi delegates to the national convention brought back evidence of considerable importance. After the nominations, they had called on Scott who then gave the compromise measures his hearty approval, assuring them that it was no new-born faith with him, for he was one of the first to come out for the compromise proposition.⁵⁷ Other delegates had opposed Scott's nomination but had had similar opportunities to come in personal contact with him and were won over by their friendly reception and by the earnest assertion—"I am a friend of the Union and the Compromise, and my life would belie any other declaration".⁵⁸ Much use was of course made of such material. Governor Foote of Mississippi and his rival and predecessor, General Quitman, both Democrats, also contributed, though perhaps unwittingly, to Scott's cause in the South. Quitman, who as a "State Rights" man opposed the regular Democratic nominee, testified that Scott had openly declared himself in favor of the compromise before Fillmore's opinion was known and on this ground had stronger claims for support than either Fillmore or Webster. As to the apprehension

⁵⁶ *Jackson Flag of the Union*, Sept. 3, Oct. 15; *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Oct. 28; *Savannah Republican*, Aug. 24; *Washington Republic*, Aug. 5.

⁵⁷ *Jackson Flag of the Union*, July 16, 23; see also Aug. 6, Oct. 22.

⁵⁸ Letter of E. A. Holt, an Alabama delegate, *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Sept. 8.

that Scott would be controlled by Seward and politicians of that stripe, he expressed his belief that Scott would "be controlled by no man, not the whole Whig party, against his convictions".⁵⁹ Foote did justice to Scott in his speech to a Democratic mass meeting at Jackson, stating that he knew him to be an early and original friend of the compromise measures and that the Whig platform was as sound on the question of slavery as the Democratic platform.⁶⁰

The campaign was characterized by much letter-writing on the part of the leading men of the party; personal explanations were necessary to make clear their position or to elaborate arguments which would hold Whigs to their duty of supporting their nominee. President Fillmore wrote two letters in Scott's behalf, one at the beginning and the other toward the end of the canvass.⁶¹ Hilliard, who had always proved himself a zealous advocate of southern rights, promptly endorsed Scott and asserted his undoubted soundness, adding, "The Whig party must be a *national party*; it must hold opinions which embrace the interests of the North and South alike; and never have I seen a conjuncture more favorable to the growth of patriotic sentiments . . . than the present".⁶² Strother of Virginia, who had been supported by the Democratic press because he refused to accept Scott, published a letter

⁵⁹ *Natchez Free Trader*, July 24. Cf. *Memphis Eagle and Enquirer*, July 4; *Jackson Flag of the Union*, July 30.

⁶⁰ *Natchez Courier*, Oct. 12.

⁶¹ Letter of July 19, in *Philadelphia North American*, July 27; *Washington Republic*, July 28; letter of Oct. 15, in *Washington Union*, Oct. 26; *New Orleans Bulletin*, Oct. 30.

⁶² *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, July 12; Hilliard, *Politics and Pen Pictures*, 261. See letter of Judge A. F. Hopkins of Alabama, July 12, in *Jackson Flag of the Union*, Aug. 20.

in which he advocated the election of the Whig candidates.⁶³ Moore and Landry of Louisiana found it necessary to come out with a card to the same purport.⁶⁴ Senators Pearce of Maryland and Badger of North Carolina added their testimony to the evidence of Scott's early advocacy of the compromise acts.⁶⁵ Graham, the vice-presidential candidate, offered further assurances of the soundness of his running mate with testimony of his devotion to the measures of pacification in their hour of trial.⁶⁶ Even Berrien announced his adhesion with the conviction, formed after an acquaintance of more than a quarter of a century, that Scott was not a man who would be liable to be affected by any undue influence in administering the government.⁶⁷ All this was expected to make up for Scott's own unwillingness to use the pen. Before the canvass closed both Cabell and Morton of Florida publicly affirmed their acquiescence in the decision of the Whig party of their state and their willingness to support Scott.⁶⁸ With this weight of opinion in the General's favor it is evident that his strength was each day becoming greater in the South.

The Whigs gave so much attention to the defence of Scott's soundness that little opportunity remained for constructive arguments. When, however, they felt justified in giving time to these arguments, they elaborated the principles of whiggery, which in general were the

⁶³ Letter to Warrenton *Whig*, *Washington Republic*, Aug. 18.

⁶⁴ *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 25, Sept. 14; *Washington Republic*, Sept. 16.

⁶⁵ *Washington Republic*, Sept. 16, 28.

⁶⁶ Graham to editor of *Wilmington Commercial*, Aug. 24, in issue of Aug. 31. Cf. letter of Sept. 4, *Washington Republic*, Oct. 1.

⁶⁷ Berrien to C. R. Hanleiter, Oct. 18, *Savannah Republican*, Oct. 27.

⁶⁸ *Washington Republic*, Aug. 23; *National Intelligencer*, Oct. 7.

constant object of their praise. They pointed out that theirs was the only party to feel a keen interest in the industrial development of the country, or to understand the wants and interests, the character and the genius of the American people, and that Whig conservatism alone could save the nation from ruin and disaster. In answer to the query, "What are the Whigs fighting for?" the New Orleans *Bulletin* of August 4 replied: "For the man who has been fighting for his country for more than forty years, for river improvements, for railroad improvements, for American industry; for the development of the resources of the country, for the elevation of our people, socially, intellectually, and religiously; for the perpetuation of the Union and the liberties of our happy land; for all the vast and varied interests of the country, which we desire shall be placed on a stable and prosperous basis; for true men and tried patriots; in fine for SCOTT, GRAHAM, OUR COUNTRY AND VICTORY!" "Democratic ascendancy, in our opinion", stated the Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, "was never more to be dreaded than now. The whole tendency of that party, in our judgment, is at this moment more threatening to the peace and prosperity of the country, than it has been at any previous time. Without the influence of Whig conservatism, should the Democratic party control the counsels of the country, we verily fear that the country in one year would be involved in war, and in other measures quite as destructive to its happiness and prosperity."⁶⁰ Whigs were warned against a party "composed of Disunionists, Abolitionists, Fillibusters, Intervention-

⁶⁰ Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, Sept. 7.

ists, and Demagogues".⁷⁰ "Democratic success", declared the Montgomery *Alabama Journal* of November 2, in its last appeal to Whigs, "will mean the prostration of the conservative Whig party and the accession of the Pierce-Van Buren-free-soil-intervention-Polk-proviso-white-basis party".

Most interesting, without doubt, was the canvass in Tennessee and Georgia—in the former for the desperate effort that was made to retain the state for Scott, and in the latter for the many complexities of the situation as well as for the rapidly increasing Scott strength. Tennessee placed a formidable array of Whig orators in the field, who hoped by ceaseless labor to counteract the influence of the Gentry-Williams-Brownlow secession, and to repeat the victory of 1840, when the Whigs had labored under a similar embarrassment. Senator Jones and Cullom were almost daily on the stump, as were a large number of local leaders.⁷¹ Ratification meetings were held in different sections of the state, numerous Scott Clubs were formed, and the Whig papers were full of the Scott fire.⁷² Before the end of the campaign arrived, almost every vestige of popular disaffection had passed away and the leaders were sanguine of success.

With the Georgia Whigs divided between Scott and Webster, but unanimous as to principles, their energies were directed toward promoting harmony as friends against a common enemy, to oppose whom they would reunite after the canvass. It was hoped that the nomi-

⁷⁰ Savannah *Republican*, Aug. 17.

⁷¹ Nashville *Republican Banner*, Oct. 7.

⁷² It was even charged later that the Whig State Committee received funds from outside for conducting the campaign. Nashville *Republican Banner*, July 18, 1853.

nation of two tickets, which avoided offending those unreconciled to a compromise arrangement, would satisfy all and bring out the full Whig strength. Accordingly, a disposition was manifested by both wings to respect each other's differences and to avoid abuse and recrimination. There was, of course, the possibility that the election might be thrown into the legislature, where the Whigs counted on having a majority but where union on one candidate was necessary to profit from this fact.⁷³ At least, the existence of the party would be preserved to prevent permanent Democratic ascendancy, and to save Georgia from "South Carolina one-sided Democracy".⁷⁴ Hence the independent Whigs, instead of opposing Scott, prepared to defend him whenever necessary.⁷⁵ He was pronounced by nearly all those of Whig antecedents to be infinitely superior to Pierce. They only regretted that the evidence of his soundness, which had come out during the campaign, had not been authentically furnished by Scott before his nomination or in his letter of acceptance.⁷⁶ Stephens and those who supported the Webster ticket with the idea of repudiating both old parties and of forming a new one, had to be contented with a limited and local following.⁷⁷ The consistent members

⁷³ Cf. Toombs to Crittenden, Oct. 9, 1852, Crittenden MSS.

⁷⁴ Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, Sept. 7.

⁷⁵ Savannah *Republican*, Aug. 21. The Columbus *Enquirer* definitely enlisted in Scott's cause, and the Savannah *Republican*, Aug. 24, and the Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, Aug. 31, posted both tickets at the head of their columns, but the Webster ticket first in order.

⁷⁶ Savannah *Republican*, Aug. 27. "As it is, we say to the Whigs of Georgia, there is no reason, so far as regards his sentiments on the Compromise measures, why they shall not cast their suffrages for General Scott." *Id.*, Oct. 14.

⁷⁷ Cf. Stephens's speech at Macon, Savannah *Republican*, Sept. 18; also at Crawfordsville, Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, Sept. 2.

of this group showed their devotion to their cause when, after Webster's death in the closing days of the campaign, they still adhered to their independent movement and voted for their deceased candidate.

The outcome of the election in the South occasioned no great surprise. The preliminary state elections in North Carolina and Florida had brought severe Whig reverses and the disaffection was expected to come more into play in the presidential contest. The prediction that Scott would fail to carry a single southern state was realized with but two exceptions, Kentucky and Tennessee. North Carolina was lost by nearly seven hundred—in part the result of the influence and activity of Clingman in the mountain districts in behalf of the Democratic candidates. Elsewhere the returns were strongly Democratic except in Delaware where Pierce won by but twenty-five votes. The southern Whigs could not be persuaded to trust Scott and the northern members of the party.⁷⁸

The conspicuous feature of the election was the large stay-at-home vote in the South. Probably one hundred thousand voters failed to exercise their electoral franchise. In Alabama Scott received scarcely half the number of votes cast for Taylor four years before. In Florida and North Carolina his vote was smaller by thousands than that of the Whig candidates in the state

⁷⁸ Toombs wrote to Crittenden, Nov. 9: "The Presidential election went very much as I expected except in Tenn. and Ky. . . . The nation had determined with singular unanimity to take a man without claims or qualifications surrounded by as desperate and dirty a set of political gamesters as ever Catiline assembled rather than the canting hypocrites who brought out Gen. Scott. The decision was a wise one. We can never have peace and security with Seward, Greeley and Co. in the ascendant in our national affairs and we had better purchase them by the destruction of the Whig party than of the Union." Crittenden MSS.

elections held a few weeks previously. Even in Georgia, with the two tickets, fully twenty thousand Whig voters, or one-half of the party, failed to go to the polls.⁷⁹ In Alabama at least many Whigs supported the Troup and Quitman State Rights ticket as an alternative to voting for either Scott or Pierce.⁸⁰ Everywhere there was a falling off in the Whig vote.

The southern Whig journals in explaining the result failed to take cognizance of the fact that similar conditions prevailed in the Democratic camp and prevented that party from polling its full strength. Hence they held that the election, with the fairly small Democratic majorities returned, was really a sign of Whig strength and showed what the party could do when united upon a candidate. They did not feel with the northern anti-slavery Whigs and with Stephens's independents that it was really the death-blow to the Whig party; so they diagnosed the situation with the view of healing the wound, whereas those who felt that the end of the party was at hand prepared to hold a post-mortem over the remains.

The cause of the defeat and of Pierce's election was assigned to the absence of the Whigs from the polls; the result was not considered as evidence of the weakness of Whig principles. It was the essential conservatism behind these principles which in the judgment of many constituted the chief value of the party.

⁷⁹ At Brunswick, Glynn County, Georgia, no polls were opened, it being the deliberate opinion of the people that none of the candidates were worthy of support. *National Intelligencer*, Nov. 10. The *Nashville Republican Banner*, Dec. 14, claimed a falling off of 86,000 in the Whig vote of the South.

⁸⁰ "With the exception of a very few honest and sincere Southern rights men, the great body of those who voted for Troup and Quitman were Whigs." *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, Nov. 25.

Upon these, the Whigs could rally for another fight. But to heal the breach it was necessary to effect the return of the disaffected to the party allegiance. It was decided that they must not be condemned nor ostracized for the course they had pursued, since it involved no antagonism in principle, that there must be no criminations and recriminations, but that, by burying this recent disagreement among other bygones, harmony and cooperation could be restored. On the other hand, it was decided that those out of sympathy with the cause should be driven out of the Whig camp, as they could do less injury when on the outside than when on the inside. Comparatively little was said of either faction of the northern wing. There could be no doubt that Seward and his allies had been fatal to Scott's success and that of the Whigs, but it was hoped that they would now recognize that they were out of place in the Whig party and that the northern wing would be purged of all but the real conservatives.⁸¹

The forces for reorganization made an abortive effort immediately after the election. The Whig sages of Tennessee gathered around the festive board, not to celebrate a victory, but to take into serious consideration the future of the party.⁸² In Alabama and Mississippi the matter was taken up by the press and by party meetings,⁸³ both of which recommended a thorough reorganization of the party in those states upon the old issues. The Whigs of Louisiana, who claimed that the new constitution, which the state had just

⁸¹ See *Augusta Chronicle and Sentinel*, in *New York Tribune*, Nov. 15, 1852.

⁸² *Nashville Republican Banner*, Dec. 3; *Memphis Eagle and Enquirer*, Dec. 9.

⁸³ *Jackson Flag of the Union*, Nov. 19; *Memphis Eagle and Enquirer*, Dec. 12.

adopted, was a Whig production,⁸⁴ hoped to be able to capture the first election under it as the proper reward for their work. But there was little response anywhere to the demand for reorganization; in Louisiana the Whigs failed to do as well as in the presidential election less than two months before, thus allowing the Democrats to take complete control of the state government and to reapportion the congressional districts so as to ensure a Democratic delegation for the next Congress.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ New Orleans *Bulletin*, Nov. 17, 20, Dec. 18, 27. They pointed out that it gave the state a chance for development in the line of banking and railroads. The Whigs as the slave-holders had advocated the apportionment of representation on the basis of the total population, including slaves, and having secured it, boasted that the constitution would guarantee Whig control in Louisiana for at least another generation. Cf. Butler, *Judah P. Benjamin*, 110.

⁸⁵ *National Intelligencer*, May 10, 1853.

CHAPTER IX.

THE KANSAS-NEBRASKA BILL.

The state and congressional elections of 1853, besides revealing the demoralization of whiggery in the South, gave conclusive proof that there was no longer a national Whig party in any sense of the term. In Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and North Carolina a fairly active canvass was carried on under the old party lines, although the Democrats were entirely unopposed in many districts where opposition seemed hopeless. Yet the Whigs barely held their own in Kentucky, failed to secure a single member of Congress from Virginia, lost two more districts in North Carolina to the Democrats, who thus secured a majority of the delegation, and in Tennessee, where under the new apportionment they had counted on eight out of the ten districts, they had to be satisfied with an equal division with their opponents, who also elected Andrew Johnson, their candidate for governor, by over two thousand.¹ In Maryland and Louisiana uninteresting and unexciting contests were carried on: in both the Whigs were badly defeated; the Louisiana Democrats, aided by a rearrangement of the districts, secured every congressman but one, while their Maryland brethren reversed the situation there by electing four out of the six members.

¹ The Tennessee Whigs later regained one congressman in the first district.

The situation in the states of the lower South again demands greater attention. In Alabama the Whigs planned a contest on old party lines but their nominee for governor declined to make the canvass. Although the candidates for the legislature and for Congress then laid especial emphasis upon the Union issue and attacked the Democrats for their fire-eating propensities, the party suffered a defeat which proved fatal to its continuance there.² The situation in Georgia was quite similar. Howell Cobb and the Union Democratic leaders had renounced the Union movement as no longer necessary, but the Whigs, joined by many Union Democrats, calling themselves "Conservatives", "Republicans", "Unionists", or "Union Conservatives", under the leadership of Stephens and Toombs, nominated Charles J. Jenkins for governor.³ They thus came very near being successful in their opposition to the "secessionists", being defeated by a majority of only five hundred.⁴

The Mississippi Whigs made a desperate effort to recover and to reorganize. "There never has been a period in the political history of Mississippi that more required a thorough organization of the friends of law, order, and good government than the present", declared the *Jackson Flag of the Union*. "By the united action of the good old Whig party, the State may yet stand 'redeemed, regenerated, and disenthralled', and assume her proper station among her sisters of the

² They saved but a single congressman, Abercrombie, the insurgent, who was reelected from the Montgomery district.

³ *Savannah Republican*, June 24, July 6. There was some talk among certain Scott Whigs of a third convention to nominate a real Whig ticket. See *Macon Citizen*, in *Washington Union*, July 24, 27, 1853.

⁴ *Savannah Republican*, Oct. 10, 1853. Stephens and Reese were elected to Congress out of a delegation of eight.

confederacy.”⁵ Conceding Democratic control of national affairs, they prepared to take up local issues as the basis for their efforts. “With favorable climate, soil, and natural resources”, read the address of the Whig Executive Committee calling a state convention, “we yet present the humiliating spectacle of a State wholly without any great works of internal improvement, or development of those resources, from the aid and assistance of our State government. Our State, under twelve or fourteen years of Democratic rule, has been permitted to remain stationary, while all our sister States are engaged in a generous emulation as to who shall best work and agree in this great cause of improvement and real progress.”⁶ They prepared to agitate for the redemption of the honor of the state by the payment of the repudiated bonds and to act as a party of retrenchment and reform. They hoped that twelve years of Democratic “misrule” had made the situation unbearable, the time ripe for a reaction.

So they brought all the party machinery into operation—local meetings, county conventions, the central executive committee, and a state convention. Before the state convention was held, however, a double Democratic split, growing out of the action of the state convention, which had forced the withdrawal of the independent-spirited Union men and then alienated many State Rights Democrats by passing over the superior claims of their candidate for congressman at large,⁷

⁵ Jackson *Flag of the Union*, Jan. 28, 1853.

⁶ *Id.*, March 18, 1853; see editorial of April 15, entitled “The Conservative and the Progressive.”

⁷ Davis, *Recollections of Mississippi and Mississippians*, 330-334; *Monticello Journal*, May 14, 28; *Houston Southern Argus*, May 11, 25, 1853.

caused the Whigs to alter their plans. At once their leading journals espoused the Union cause and condemned the corruption of caucuses and conventions, which were so prone to subordinate the will of the people to the desire for the spoils. "The *spirit of party* has ruled Mississippi with a rod of iron, and has borne like the nightmare upon her energies and best interests. It is time to shake off the incubus. Let the people call to places of trust and responsibility pure patriots, without regard to old party distinctions, regarding only their honesty and capability and their *Integrity to the Union and the Constitution*." ⁸ When the Whig convention met at the appointed time, in place of formal nominations it only adopted resolutions endorsing candidates already in the field as "the choice of the people". Though all the men named were Whigs, the candidature of Governor Foote for the United States Senate and of the Union Democratic congressmen for reelection was later approved by this new Union movement. An interesting canvass followed. The Union men, barring out old party issues, insisted that the contest was between the Union party and the State Rights party, repeating the contest of 1851. The bond question was dropped as one that might preclude Democratic cooperation; ⁹ the sentiments of Pierce's inaugural were stamped with approval. But all this was in vain. It was impossible to duplicate the victory of 1851. The Democratic state ticket was elected and every one of

⁸ *American Citizen*, in *Jackson Flag of the Union*, June 24; cf. *Natchez Courier*, *Raymond Hinds County Gazette*, in *ibid.*; *id.*, June 17, 1853.

⁹ The Democrats were quite ready to hold the Whigs to the advocacy of the payment of the bonds. *Houston Southern Argus*, Sept. 14, 1853.

the Democratic candidates for Congress, although all the Union men of the last delegation—two Democrats and one Whig, were up for reelection.

It is evident that the Whig party in the South had degenerated into a mere opposition party, ready to act under one name or another in the cause "against the Democrats". "The cardinal principles and policy of the Whig party will endure under every vicissitude of fortune", wrote Senator Bell of Tennessee after Scott's defeat, "and an organization in some form, and under some denomination, Whig, Conservative, or what not—some method of securing a concentrated effort by which those principles can be brought to bear, and have a salutary influence upon, if not the control of public affairs, must and will be maintained. . . . Party divisions will and must ever exist."¹⁰ The southern Whig party had been composed from the start of factions which, although apparently incongruous, were all essentially conservative. The state rights men sought protection for the institutions of the South in general and for negro slavery as the peculiar foundation upon which they were based; the nationalists were in favor of safeguarding existing rights, privileges, and conditions, North as well as South. On the whole, the coalition of the two elements was a natural political

¹⁰ Letter of Dec. 1, Nashville *Republican Banner*, Dec. 22, 1852.

The Savannah *Republican*, Nov. 6, 1852, commented on the news of Scott's defeat. "Whig principles and Whig minorities still exist. The former are, in our opinion, the only foundation stones of wise political structures, and minorities are the materials from which majorities are constructed. You may call the party *Whig* or *Conservative*, or what you will, Democratic rule will always give occasion for the formation of *some* party to arrest its destructive and disorganizing tendencies."

move.¹¹ The effect of it was that all but the irreconcilable state rights men were gradually won over to the larger view of conservatism and to latitudinarian views.

It would seem difficult to understand how slave-holders would be benefited by northern national conservatism, especially after the northern Whigs had established a reputation for anti-slavery propensities. Except in the matter of the external relations of the country, where both opposed annexation, fillibustering, and intervention, the latter becoming a moot point at the time of Kossuth's visit to the United States in 1851, the Whigs North and South had to face different problems as conservatives. In the North, the attack came from within, from local opponents who could be combatted from the ranks of the party. For the South, however, the attack came largely from without, from opponents in the northern states, men enrolled in the ranks of either party. Southern Whig conservatism protected the established institutions, ideas, and traditions of the North, while northern Whig conservatism would seem, at first glance, to offer no guarantee to the peculiar institution of the South. The southerners, however, did not feel that such was the actual situation. They felt that the northern conservatives needed their support against "the centrifugal tendencies of locofocoism" too much for that. This was pointed out by Cabell in the exciting days that preceded the compromise acts of 1850. Commenting on the devotion of northerners to the Union, he declared, "To you it [the

¹¹ In 1852 a stranger combination than this was proposed when there was a possibility that the extreme state rights men and the Whigs in Alabama and Georgia might unite in common cause against the Democrats. Cf. *Toombs, Stephens, and Cobb Correspondence*; *Montgomery Alabama Journal*, March, 1852; *Mobile Advertiser*, Feb. 20, 1852.

Union] may be necessary to save you from the effects of Socialism, Agrarianism, Fanny Wrightism, Radicalism, Dorrisism, and Abolitionism. The *conservatism of slavery* may be necessary to save you from the thousand destructive *isms* infecting the social organization of your section".¹² Many northern Whigs—the "silver grey" or "cotton" Whigs in particular—saw the reasonableness of the expectation that they would defend the institution of slavery from the hostile attacks of the abolition agitator.

The southern disunion movement attempted in the later forties was staunchly opposed by the southern Whigs, who with singular unanimity sustained the compromise measures and defeated their enemies on the secession issue. Hot-headed nullifiers of the 1832 period and others who had not thought it treason at that time to calculate the value of the Union became the leaders of the cohorts that had recently come to its rescue. This was clear proof of their conservatism and of their nationalism. But in their zeal for the Union they had at times laid aside or belittled the party line and cooperated with a wing of their traditional opponents. The Union movement was demoralizing, Whig measures had become obsolete, and fellowship with their northern allies had become less desirable. United on the Georgia platform of 1850, their position on the sectional issue agreed substantially with that of the Democrats except as to the constitutional basis and the

¹² Cabell on March 5, 1850, *Cong. Globe*, 31 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 242. In the course of his speech he stated, "On all questions, except this of slavery, they [northern Whigs] do constitute the conservative body of the North; and on this they are more reliable than the northern Democratic party". *Ibid.*, 239. Two years later he had changed his mind and concluded a similar statement with the words, "and upon that they have run as wild as wild can be".

desirability of the remedy proposed. A number of state rights Whigs joined the Democrats on the secession issue, while many Union Whigs were attracted by the greater soundness of the northern Democrats. Most of them, however, felt that they could never join the Democratic party, for they regarded its principles as hostile to the true interests of the people. The economic and social as well as the party line separated them from their traditional opponents.

After the election of 1852 the southern Whigs occupied an isolated position; they held little communication with the remnant of the northern wing and were content to deal with local political issues. The Milledgeville *Southern Recorder* undoubtedly expressed the sentiments of many when, late in 1853, under the caption, "A National Party—its Basis—its Aims", it pronounced the virtual dissolution of the two old "pseudo-national" political organizations and recommended that the true friends of the Union and the constitution band together and keep together, "it matters not under what name, so their principles and aims are one and indivisible". It proposed a series of principles, strongly assertive of devotion to the Union, with federal relations properly adjusted to assure the rights of the states and with an end of all sectional agitation.¹³ This proposition contained nothing more than what Stephens and others had been preaching for two years, but now the situation was such that the demand had become fairly general. A party was shortly to make its way into the South and to commend itself to the support of old Whigs on just such a basis. Meantime they avoided a factious opposition to the Pierce administration and

¹³ Jackson *Flag of the Union*, Dec. 30, 1853.

were as generous with their expressions of praise as with signs of disapproval.

The sectional repose which the southern Whigs had always eloquently advocated and which they had been largely instrumental in securing, was suddenly disturbed by the introduction and passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill in the first session of Congress under the new administration. Though the credit or blame for the success of the measure which effected the repeal of the Missouri Compromise restriction against slavery in the northern portion of the territory acquired by the Louisiana purchase is properly assignable to the Democratic members, northern and southern, the Whigs from the slave states played an important part in the process of placing it on the statute book. Southerners of both parties were in substantial agreement on the slavery question, but there were always political considerations that were recognized by enough party men to prevent unanimity upon any practical proposition that might come up. So it was in this case, but, inasmuch as the party tie had become manifestly weaker, it is evident that the majority of the Whigs were primarily influenced by the interests of their section and that as a result the sectional line again became strong enough to prevent a real division on any other basis.

On the sixteenth of January, twelve days after the report of Senator Douglas from the committee on the territories, which, with the bill introduced, announced the doctrine of non-intervention and declared the Missouri Compromise line inoperative and void, as being inconsistent with the principle of non-intervention, Senator Dixon, Clay's successor, presented an amendment which explicitly provided for the repeal of the

congressional slavery restriction that had stood for over a third of a century.¹⁴ His urgent advocacy of this step forced Douglas to embody a similar amendment in the substitute bill which he brought in on January 23. Dixon doubtless saw in this an opportunity to break the rule according to which the Democrats claimed greater soundness on the slavery question because they always assumed more advanced ground in its defence. A month later, at an early stage in the consideration of the bill in the Senate, Badger of North Carolina announced, upon the authority given by southern Whig senators in a caucus over the bill, that the measure met the unanimous approval of his colleagues.¹⁵ Senator Bell of Tennessee, however, was from the start only lukewarm, and though he for a time hesitated to break with the southern members, he eventually came out in opposition not only to the various subordinate features of the measure but even to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. His was the only vote in the Senate against the Senate bill, although Clayton of Delaware, who was absent at the late hour when the vote was taken, later asked leave to record his vote in the negative because of his opposition to the

¹⁴ *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 175.

¹⁵ This caucus on Feb. 15 was called to counteract the influence of the attitude of the *National Intelligencer* against the bill. A resolution was adopted disapproving the course of that journal and declaring that it did not truly represent the opinion of the Whig party of the South; a committee was appointed to confer with the editors, and Badger was requested to state in his speech on the following day that the southern Whigs were a unit in favor of the bill. *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 755-760, 902, 937-941; cf. reports of *New York Courier and Enquirer* and *Washington Star*, in *Savannah Republican*, Feb. 23, 1854; Toombs to Wm. M. Burwell, Feb. 3, 1854, Burwell MSS.

Badger was the author of that amendment which was later inserted as a guarantee that the bill in repealing the Missouri Compromise would not revive the old Louisiana laws that protected slavery in that domain. *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 520.

squatter sovereignty feature. Bayard, the other Delaware senator, became totally indifferent, if not opposed to the bill before the final vote on May 25, when he abstained from voting.¹⁶ In the House, where a skillful manœuvre by Stephens finally brought the measure to a vote, over one-third of the southern Whigs voting opposed the passage of the bill.¹⁷

The arguments of the southern Whig advocates of the measure did not differ materially from those of the Democrats with whom they were cooperating. The great principles that were declared to lie at the root of the bill were those of non-intervention and popular sovereignty, making it the logical outcome of the compromise of 1850. It was regarded as a long delayed act of justice to the South, one which it was unbecoming in a representative of a southern state to refuse. They were not confident that any positive advantages would accrue to it by the actual extension of slavery to the new territories; but they saw in the point at issue a question of principle, one which tended to array the free-soilers in solid ranks against the South, and with

¹⁶ *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 775-779. Clayton and Bell voted against the measure.

¹⁷ Hunt, the only Louisiana Whig member, Rogers and Puryear of the three Whigs from North Carolina, and Taylor, Cullom, Bugg, and Etheridge, or two-thirds of the Tennessee Whig delegation. On the other hand, Stephens and Reese of Georgia and Abercrombie of Alabama were more independents than Whigs, while the four Whigs from Missouri had a peculiarly local interest that required their support. This left only six others for the bill. Four southern Whigs were not present at the final vote. Of these four at least one (Franklin of Maryland) opposed the bill. *House Journal*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 923-924. See also *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 1254; *Whig Almanac*, 1855, 32-33.

The contemporary newspapers, the *Cong. Globe*, Rhodes, and Von Holst all give incorrect analyses of the vote. See *Nashville Republican Banner*, May 31, 1854; *New York Tribune*, in Rhodes, *History of the United States*, I, 489; *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 755.

a successful outcome in sight they welcomed the struggle in their firm belief in the healthy moral effect of such a victory of principle.¹⁸

It is noteworthy that the Cass-Douglas doctrine of "squatter sovereignty", which recognized the inherent right of the people of a territory to govern themselves and hence, through the territorial legislature, to pass on the question of slavery either to establish or to prohibit it, received almost no support from southern Whigs in either house.¹⁹ Badger argued that Congress had plenary powers of legislation over the territories and refused to acknowledge "directly or indirectly, the existence of this squatter sovereignty". He and Bayard both insisted that the people of a territory had only a derivative or delegated power of legislation arising from an act of Congress.²⁰ The friends of the bill passed over this feature in silence, claiming that the great principle asserted was the principle of non-intervention, which rendered the unfair and unconstitutional congressional restriction inoperative, null, and void. Senator Toombs of Georgia held to the views of popular sovereignty which he and most southern Whigs had applied to California in 1849 and 1850, and hence declared that "this sovereignty of right which is the birthright of every American citizen . . . may,

¹⁸ A. H. Stephens to Wm. W. Burwell, May 7, 1854, Stephens MSS.

¹⁹ Senators Pearce and Pratt of Maryland and Benjamin of Louisiana seem to have come nearest in the Senate to conceding this point. The whole Missouri delegation in the House maintained the doctrine of squatter sovereignty or "territorial sovereignty", as Oliver, one of them, termed it. See *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 728; *Missouri Republican*, Feb. 19, 1854.

²⁰ Ready of Tennessee held exactly the same views. His conclusion, like that of Bayard, was that if the Missouri Compromise was unconstitutional, squatter sovereignty could not possibly be constitutional. *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 745.

may, it must remain in abeyance until the society becomes sufficiently strong and stable to be entitled to its full expression as a sovereign State. But yet even in abeyance this sovereignty does not belong to the General Government, and its exercise is a naked and unmixed despotism".²¹ Senator Dawson, his colleague, applied these views to the slavery question and asserted: "Then when the territory has sufficient population to be formed into a State, it shall come into the Union with a republican form of government, with or without slavery, as its people may decide. Is not this the principle involved in this bill?"²²

Many were bold and outspoken in their rejection of the theory of squatter sovereignty for that of popular sovereignty. Among these were Senator Clayton, of Delaware, and Zollikoffer, the representative of the Nashville district of Tennessee. The former had ceased his support of the bill on the ground that it contained the squatter sovereignty doctrine, which he declared was a complete abandonment of the whole idea of non-intervention, which was claimed to be the underlying principle of the bill.²³ Zollikoffer, however, supported the bill as not giving countenance to Cass's heretical doctrine.²⁴ He claimed that the sovereignty of France over Louisiana had been transferred to the general government but, as the constitution restricted the power of Congress over slavery, that portion of the

²¹ *Ibid.*, 347.

²² *Ibid.*, 304.

²³ *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 550.

²⁴ "I am aware that some of the friends of the bill think that what I regard as exceptional in squatter sovereignty is embraced in the bill. Still the large majority think with me; and I cannot consent to lose the chance of repealing the unjust act of 1820 because some fancy that they see squatter sovereignty in the bill." *Id.*, Appendix, 586.

supreme power or sovereignty "lies *dormant* until the people come to *act for themselves in framing State constitutions*, and then it *passes to them*. If Congress, then, has not the power to do this, it cannot give to a Territorial Legislature the power to do it. The Territorial Legislature can exercise no powers of sovereignty which Congress do [*sic*] not confer upon them".²⁵

Most of the southern opponents of the bill endeavored to establish their opposition on sound southern grounds. They called attention to the orthodox southern view which asserted the right of the slave-holder to carry his property into the organized territories without interference by any power or in any manner until a state government was organized; they declared that the power of a territorial legislature to establish or to prohibit slavery was inconsistent not only with this view but even with the principle of non-intervention upon which the bill purported to be based. They refused to abandon this position to be handed over to the "tender mercies of squatter sovereignty".²⁶ Taylor of Tennessee asserted that the Missouri Compromise was not inconsistent with the doctrine of popular sovereignty, which he defined as the doctrine "that the Territories, when they have passed their minority, and, as States, form their constitutions, *at that moment* assume the garb and attributes of sovereignty, and may *then and thereafter establish and regulate their own domestic institutions*". He denounced the repeal of the Missouri Compromise as "a direct violation of the great republican principle of popular sovereignty".²⁷

²⁵ *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 586.

²⁶ Etheridge of Tennessee, *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 836.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 815.

His colleague, Cullom, complained that "to render this power of 'squatter sovereignty' complete, this bill deprives Congress of any supervisory control over the acts of the Territorial Legislature; whereas such control was retained in the territorial acts of 1850", which the bill purported to follow.²⁸ When, however, the bill did contain a provision which required that the laws of the territorial legislature should be sent to the general government for approval, Clayton took occasion to point out that this would allow any man in either branch of Congress to move to repeal or to disallow any measure submitted, which would make further interference and further agitation of the slavery question in Congress inevitable. This made it, he held, a complete abandonment of the principle of non-interference.²⁹ Bell raised a pointed question: "Suppose the first Legislature shall admit slavery, may not the next abolish it, and thus keep up a perpetual struggle; while Congress, at the same time, may be agitated by questions of further intervention?"³⁰

The admitted failure of the advocates of the bill to harmonize on the principle of squatter sovereignty was pointed out by the Whig opponents, who called attention to the varied interpretations placed upon the measure—"the Babel-like confusion of opinions". "The language of the bill is so subtle, circumlocutory, and tautological", said Cullom, "that it seems to have been intended to bear a construction to suit any meridian."³¹ "This [bill]", stated Franklin of Maryland, "I believe to be intentionally equivocal and obscure in phrase-

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 541.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 391.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 939.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 541; *cf.* 815.

ology. I believe it to be framed with a full knowledge that gentlemen from the North would put one construction upon it, and gentlemen from the South another, upon matters of vital importance. . . . Its phraseology is such that the most astute lawyers cannot understand it, and no two men whom you meet in the street can agree upon its true meaning.”³²

The Badger amendment, which annulled whatever remained of the old Louisiana law recognizing slavery, was denounced as a “dangerous and unwarranted intervention by Congress . . . in order to give full and free scope to the principle of ‘squatter sovereignty’ ”.³³ Franklin of Maryland deplored this amendment as an act of congressional intervention which prevented the restoration of the territory to the status it had occupied with reference to slavery at the time of its acquisition. “If the principle of non-intervention is to be *bona fide* the controlling principle in the organization of these territories, I aver that, to be consistent, they must be restored to their original *status*; and if the repeal of the act of 1820 does not, *proprio vigore*, revive that *status*, it ought to be declared to be revived by special enactment.”³⁴

Nearly all the southern Whig members favored the recall of the Missouri Compromise as an unjust and unconstitutional measure. Repeal on the principle of the non-intervention doctrine was quite consistent with their attitude both before and since the compromise measures of 1850. But as consistency is not an unfailing rule in politics, considering the influence of the

³² *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 421.

³³ Speech of Cullom, *ibid.*, 541; cf. that of Bell, 939, and of Taylor, 815.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 419.

conservative principle with southern Whigs, they would be expected to look carefully to the ultimate consequences of any such step in determining their position. With most southern Whigs, however, this consideration was overborne by the necessity of showing as sincere a devotion to the cause of slavery as their Democratic rivals.

Southern Whig senators admitted that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise might cause agitation and excitement. Dixon and Clayton justified their support of the repeal only on the ground that the proposition came from the North. "I did not ask for it", declared the latter, "I would not have proposed it; and I may regret that it was offered, because I do not believe that it will repay us for the agitation and irritation it has cost. But can a Senator, whose constituents hold slaves, be expected to resist and refuse what the North thus freely offers us as a measure due to us?"⁸⁵ Senator Bayard, his colleague, stood wavering at the parting of the way, uncertain as to what course to take. On the abstract question he favored the repeal of the Missouri Compromise restriction, but he feared that, instead of allaying agitation, it would lead to greater anti-slavery fanaticism.⁸⁶ The Tennessee members who opposed the bill, together with Hunt of Louisiana, all deprecated a repeal as a breach of faith that would lead to a dangerous renewal of sectional discord and dissension. Cullom praised the Missouri Compromise and the patriots who had enacted it. "The bill now before this House", he complained, "seeks to repudiate their plighted faith, and to pull down the work of their

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 383; cf. 141.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 775-776.

hands, which has stood as a monument of their wisdom and patriotism for thirty-four years; which has been cheerfully acquiesced in by all sections of the Confederacy, and for which the pure men of 1820 have been canonized in the hearts of the American people. This great measure of pacification is now, for mere party purposes, and party and personal advancement, to be trampled under foot.”⁸⁷ Senator Bell expressed himself strongly against the policy of disturbing the Missouri Compromise and testified that every southern senator with whom he had discussed the matter, except Toombs, had deprecated the introduction of this measure of repeal.⁸⁸ He himself questioned the constitutional power of Congress to enact the Missouri Compromise, but declared that “it was accepted by the South, and acquiesced in as a measure of compromise between the North and the South, and its constitutionality was sanctioned by President Monroe and his cabinet”.⁸⁹ He thought its repeal unfortunate to the country and mischievous in its tendencies. “What practical advantage or benefit to the country generally, or to the South in particular”, he asked, “will the repeal of the Missouri Compromise secure?”⁴⁰ Hunt of Louisiana, in explaining that there could be no gain commensurate with the risk of disaster that would be incurred, reached ground that was directly opposed to the traditional southern stand in the sectional controversy. He called attention to the general opinion that the climate and soil of the new territories were not

⁸⁷ *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 538.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 939. Senator Badger, on the eve of the Civil War, called his vote “the worst vote I ever gave in my life”. *Raleigh Register*, Oct. 17, 1860.

⁸⁹ *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 413.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

adapted to the great staples of the South and that the constitutions organizing state governments would probably provide for the prohibition of slavery, and then boldly declared:

We, of the South, already have lands sufficient for culture by our slaves beyond any number they can possibly increase to in a long series of ages; and it is well known that the policy of the country is restrictive of the increase of slaves. . . . Why then this lust for new land not wanted and not capable of being used? . . . There are those who desire that the slaveholding States should acquire additional territory, in the belief or hope of effecting and preserving a balance or equilibrium between them and the non-slaveholding States. But this is a vain and delusive hope.

The fact cannot be disguised, that slavery in our country cannot keep pace with the growth of the white race.⁴¹

Whigs in the South were divided, even before the issue of the Nebraska bill was raised, into two wings, one composed of those who, politically, were still first and foremost party men, therefore essentially nationalistic in spirit and strongly anti-Democratic, and the other composed of those who, largely animated by a sense of devotion to the institution of slavery, were willing to lay aside party considerations to further the rights of their section. Inasmuch as pride and faith in the Whig party had of late declined in the South, the latter class undoubtedly constituted a significant minority. This division showed itself everywhere, except perhaps in Missouri,⁴² soon after Congress took up the proposed measure providing territorial governments for Kansas and Nebraska, when one group came to deprecate and the other to advocate its passage.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 437.

⁴² The *Missouri Republican* of March 23, 1854, stated that every Whig paper in the state was for the Nebraska bill.

For a time both wings looked with suspicion upon the circumstances of the introduction of the territorial bill, as Douglas was known to be an ambitious candidate for the Democratic nomination in 1856,⁴³ and especially as the announcement followed that the support of the measure was to be regarded as a test of Democratic orthodoxy.⁴⁴ Many Whigs, however, hesitated to announce a definite attitude toward the proposed piece of legislation.⁴⁵ A few zealous party organs like the New Orleans *Bulletin*, denounced "this Douglas movement" as a bit of electioneering humbuggery to create political capital in the South; it hoped that it would not be taken up by the southern representatives on the ground that "in no possible event, immediate, contingent, or remote," could its success benefit the South.⁴⁶ The Savannah *Republican* pointed to the opposition of conservative northern journals and issued a "Warning to the South";⁴⁷ the Raleigh *Register* doubted the utility of disturbing the Missouri Compromise but reserved the right to revise its views;⁴⁸ while

⁴³ *Mobile Advertiser*, Feb. 16, 1854. The Richmond *Whig* on Jan. 25, 1854, spurned "that tricky demagogue, Douglas". In a little over a fortnight, however, it commended his "disinterested fearlessness".

⁴⁴ *Nashville Republican Banner*, Feb. 1; cf. *Washington Union*, Jan. 22, 26, 29, etc., 1854.

"It is a little curious to notice the alacrity with which many of the Whig papers of this State jump out in opposition to the Territorial bill for the organization of the two territories of Kansas and Nebraska, evidently because it has been brought forward under the auspices of a Democratic Senator—Stephen A. Douglas—and is understood to receive the support and sanction of the Administration." *Wilmington Journal*, Feb. 21, 1854.

⁴⁵ The *Nashville Union*, Feb. 12, called attention to the silence of the Whig papers of the South. See also *Mobile Register*, Feb. 17; Kosciusko (Miss.) *Southern Sun*, March 25, 1854.

⁴⁶ Jan. 27; cf. Feb. 10, 1854.

⁴⁷ Jan. 28, 1854.

⁴⁸ Feb. 1, 1854.

the Nashville *Republican Banner* contented itself with criticising the position of its rival at home and the central Democratic organ at Washington.⁴⁹ Within a month or two most Whig journals announced that, as the issue of repeal of the Missouri Compromise restriction had been made, satisfied that there could be but one sentiment among southern men as to the principle involved, they were ready to take their stand upon the side in favor of repeal.⁵⁰ Little was said, however, in praise of the bill itself.

This was the attitude of the majority of the rank and file of the party. The Whig members in the state legislatures of Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi joined with the Democrats in adopting resolutions which approved of the principle of non-intervention in the Nebraska territorial bill,⁵¹ while the Tennessee senate, in which the Democrats had the barest possible majority, took similar action with practical unanimity.⁵² The only Whig state convention of the year, that of the North Carolina Whigs prefatory to the local gubernatorial

⁴⁹ March 1, 2, 1854.

⁵⁰ Savannah *Republican*, Feb. 25; Nashville *Republican Banner*, March 7, 1854. The Mobile *Advertiser*, Feb. 18, held that non-intervention was the true doctrine, while the Missouri restriction was unconstitutional and unjust. It added: "If the North . . . will consent in direct terms to repeal the Missouri line, we think it the policy and duty of Southern men to vote for the measure, but we protest against the South being placed in a false light in the matter, in other words, being made to appear the aggressor instead of the recipient."

⁵¹ *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 27, March 18, April 1, 4, 1854.

⁵² Nashville *Union*, March 5, in Washington *Union*, March 14, 1854.

Lucas, a Whig member of the lower house, offered a Nebraska resolution commending the position of Senator Jones, giving as his reason: "The Whig party has always suffered the Democratic party to get the advantage of them on slavery—they had held back, afraid to take position until their adversaries had gained all the benefit of prompt and speedy action, and in this they had been beaten and ought to have been beaten as long as they pursued such a policy." Nashville *Republican Banner*, March 7. All such resolutions in the house were tabled.

torial campaign, declared "in favor of the doctrine of non-intervention by Congress on the subject of slavery within the territories of the United States now held or acquired".⁵³

Most Whigs, however, were reported to be indifferent as to the outcome of the movement.⁵⁴ Few could develop real enthusiasm for an abstract principle, which, whatever it might have meant to the South a quarter of a century earlier, might never in the future bring any practical advantages to it. Apprehensions regarding a renewed agitation of the slavery question in Congress soon developed.⁵⁵ For this reason the New Orleans *Bulletin* strongly deplored the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and subscribed fully to the views of Hunt, the Louisiana Whig congressman.⁵⁶ On this ground Botts denounced the Nebraska bill in his characteristically vigorous and extravagant style.⁵⁷ Crittenden of Kentucky, one of the sages of the party, favored the principle of the Nebraska bill over the rule

⁵³ *Wilmington Journal*, Feb. 24; *National Intelligencer*, March 14, 1854.

⁵⁴ New Orleans *Bee*, March 24. Public meetings in favor of the Nebraska bill were thinly attended and the proceedings marked by little evidence of enthusiasm. Cf. *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 25, 1854.

⁵⁵ *Mobile Advertiser*, Jan. 17, 1854. A large number of Wilmington Whigs wrote to their senator, Clayton, on Feb. 13: "This Bill, odious in principle, uncalled for by any political exigency, and if passed, opening the flood-gates to future agitation on the Slavery question, we earnestly call upon you to oppose with all the power of argument, eloquence and moral influence you possess." Clayton MSS.

⁵⁶ Feb. 18, April 6, 1854; cf. above, p. 295.

⁵⁷ "As a southern man and as a national man, I should like to see this misshapen and ill-begotten monster killed. . . . Let the demon of discord be strangled in its birth! . . . Let every lover of his country and of its peace, and harmony, and good will, and honor, and good faith, and durability, turn from it with loathsome and shuddering disgust, as they would avoid a pestilence or the plague! Let him treat it as a disturber of his country's peace, honor, welfare, perpetuity!" *Washington Union*, Feb. 17, 1854.

fixed by the Missouri Compromise; as, however, the latter was regarded as a sort of landmark in the political progress of the nation, and was, in his opinion, never superseded or abrogated, he believed that its repeal without the sincere concurrence of the North would be productive of serious agitations and disturbances.⁵⁸ Many feared that its repeal would result in eventual damage to the South by causing a great accession of strength to the free-soil faction and would, by exposing the South to the charge of breach of faith and wilful violation of a great national compromise, arm abolitionism with new weapons against the South.⁵⁹ After all, declared a thoughtful and observant southern Whig in analyzing the situation, "What the South wants—and all that it now wants—is quiet on the slave question."⁶⁰

There were, moreover, features of the bill which the Whigs at home relished no more than their representatives at Washington. They, too, objected to the squatter sovereignty construction. The *Montgomery Alabama Journal* on April 8 declared that this was receding from the Georgia platform, abandoning the very feature of the Utah and New Mexico bills of 1850. "Let the South but once admit that a Territorial legislature may abolish slavery", wrote a correspondent of the

⁵⁸ Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, II, 102-103.

At the public dinner given to Crittenden after his election as United States senator, the toastmaster announced that he had a letter from a distinguished and venerable Whig, Adam Beatty, in which the latter urged the country to stand by the Missouri Compromise. This announcement was received with loud applause. *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 24, 1854.

⁵⁹ Fayetteville *Observer*, Jan. 30, in *Wilmington Journal*, Feb. 27. A few months later, it was pointed out that these fears had not been without a foundation, *Mobile Advertiser*, May 17, 1854.

⁶⁰ S. S. Nicholas to Crittenden, Feb. 5, Crittenden MSS.

Alexandria *Gazette*, "and then will its area have been definitely settled and its acres ascertained."⁶¹ "Strike the [Badger] proviso and the 'squatter sovereignty' clauses out of these bills", urged a Georgia journal, "and we are their warm advocates; let them remain and we would not give the value of a feather for all the advantages the South will ever gain from them."⁶² The Nashville *Banner* came out in even bolder tones: "Decidedly, however, as we are in favor of the repeal—now that the issue has been made—we could not consistently with our views of the constitutional rights of the South vote for it, if clogged with the recognition of the principle of Squatter Sovereignty. If that 'Trojan Horse' be once admitted into the citadel of Southern Rights, there will never be another slave State formed out of any territory now owned, or which may hereafter be acquired by the United States."⁶³ Many, however, were content to explain that their support of the bill gave no sanction to the squatter sovereignty doctrine.⁶⁴

As the possibility of a dual interpretation of the bill was aired in debate and through the press the measure began to lose ground in the South and to develop opposition, especially among Whigs. The course of the *National Intelligencer* in opposing the measure gradually won the approval of a considerable portion of its southern subscribers.⁶⁵ A growing sentiment in Ten-

⁶¹ April 8, in *National Intelligencer*, April 11, 1854.

⁶² Griffin *American Union*, April 13, in *National Intelligencer*, April 18, 1854.

⁶³ Nashville *Republican Banner*, March 7; cf. Fayetteville *Observer*, April 3, 1854.

⁶⁴ Tallahassee *Sentinel*, April 11, in *National Intelligencer*, April 18, 1854.

⁶⁵ See the letters to the *National Intelligencer*, *passim*, especially the two in the issue of June 24. One of them gave this testimony: "For

nessee and Kentucky sustained the position of Senator Bell and the other southern Whigs who refused to support the bill.⁶⁶ The editor of the *Nashville Banner*, who had previously declared himself in favor of the repeal of the congressional restriction, now asked, after a canvass among the cotton merchants and other citizens of central Tennessee, "Who wants the Missouri Compromise repealed?" stating that he had failed to hear the first expression of anxiety to see this accomplished.⁶⁷ A month later he declared that if the bill passed it would be only because it was held up as a Democratic measure in support of which Democrats were expected to yield up personal opinions and preferences.⁶⁸ The *Clarksville Chronicle*, having stated that there was no division be-

thirty years I have been an attentive observer of politics and politicians, and to some extent have mingled in the contests of my state. I claim to know Georgia and her public men as well as another. With the intelligent and reflecting portion of the old Whigs, *your course on the Nebraska and Kansas bill needs no vindication; you may rely upon truth and your acknowledged conservatism to sustain you. . . .* I have talked with many intelligent gentlemen on the Nebraska bill and I assure you that notwithstanding all, like myself, agree that it would have been better that the line of 36° 30' had never been adopted, yet they seriously question the expediency of its repeal."

⁶⁶ *Louisville Journal*, in *Nashville Republican Banner*, April 27; *Paris (Ky.) Western Citizen*, April 21, in *National Intelligencer*, April 25; *Franklin Weekly Review*, in *Nashville Republican Banner*, April 8; *Knoxville Whig*, in *id.*, April 21; *Clarksville Chronicle*, in *id.*, April 27; *Maury Intelligencer*, in *id.*, May 24, 1854. In Virginia, the *Warrenton Flag* and the *Alexandria Gazette* could not see that the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, with the enactment of squatter sovereignty, would do the South any good, except as an empty triumph. *National Intelligencer*, April 8. R. E. Scott, a prominent Warrenton Whig, came out with a lengthy and elaborate repudiation of the Nebraska bill, *id.*, May 11.

⁶⁷ April 7, 1854.

⁶⁸ May 6. "It is a Democratic measure, brought forward by a Democratic aspirant for the Presidency, and sustained by a Democratic Administration; and *from party considerations* Southern as well as Northern Democrats may vote and pass it, who, but for those considerations, would not 'touch it with a forty foot pole'."

tween Whigs of the North and South, continued: "There is little danger that the Southern Whigs will enter the lists as the champions of the measure; they may silently acquiesce in the passage of the bill, but cannot be made to view it as a measure promising peace to the country or advantages to the South."⁶⁹ The New Orleans *Bulletin*, the leader of the opposition in the Gulf states, came out in an editorial entitled "Southern Sentiment and the Nebraska Humbug", which declared its belief "that if the struggle on the Nebraska bill could continue two or three months longer, the real sentiment of the Southern people would become so unmistakably known that most of the representatives would drop the demagogical abortion as a thing not fit to be touched".⁷⁰ Even in Missouri, a portion of the Whigs came to oppose the measure.⁷¹

Among the Whigs of the slave states the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill occasioned practically no excitement.⁷² Most of them regarded it as simply doing

⁶⁹ In Nashville *Republican Banner*, April 27, 1854.

⁷⁰ May 24, 1854.

⁷¹ When, in December, the Whig members of the Missouri legislature met in caucus and adopted a platform, they agreed to support no man for speaker or United States senator not in favor of "acquiescing in" the Kansas-Nebraska bill, especially the part on the Missouri Compromise repeal. A correspondent of the *Missouri Republican*, Dec. 30, explained the language "acquiescing in" as essential to the harmony and unity of the Whig party: "You are not ignorant of the fact that very many of the oldest, soundest, most consistent Whigs of this state were opposed to the Nebraska bill when it was pending before Congress. They thought the true policy of the South was to keep western territory open as long as possible without organization, from a fear that they would eventually become free States and surround Missouri on all sides." He explained the position of the Whig politicians for the bill as necessary because Benton took the opposite stand.

⁷² Stephens's statement, made six years later, to the contrary notwithstanding: "Never was an act of Congress so generally and so unanimously hailed with delight at the South." May 9, 1860. Johnston and

justice to the South on the basis of non-intervention—a barren victory;⁷³ some, however, regarded it as a needless reaffirmation of the principle of the compromise of 1850 with objectionable features that made it a doubtful benefit to the South.⁷⁴ Those who had opposed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise as an impolitic, if not unjust step, rested content with a repetition of their previous warning against a renewal of anti-slavery agitation and fanaticism.⁷⁵ When squatter sovereignty came to be given a practical test and the South, despite the general feeling which prevailed outside of Missouri that slavery could not thrive in the newly organized territories, took up the contest for control in Kansas, the southern Whigs—so far as they could then be called by that name—like the Democrats, considered it to the interest of the entire South that slavery should be extended into the region previously closed to it.⁷⁶

To what extent consideration for the position of northern party associates had determined the course of those southern Whigs who opposed the Nebraska bill, it would be difficult to say. Members from the two sections had conferred together privately from the

Browne, *Life of A. H. Stephens*, 360. Compare with this the statement of the *Charleston Mercury*, June 21: "By many it is regarded with indifference, by some openly opposed; while the mass look upon it as a thing of so little practical good that it is not worth the labor of an active struggle to maintain it." *National Intelligencer*, June 27, 1854.

⁷³ *Macon Messenger*, *Milledgeville Southern Recorder*, in *National Intelligencer*, June 7, 1854.

⁷⁴ The *Georgia Union*, May 27, considered it as a perfect triumph for the North, *National Intelligencer*, June 1, 1854.

⁷⁵ *Id.*, June 24; *New Orleans Bulletin*, June 16, 1854.

⁷⁶ The *New Orleans Bulletin*, Oct. 18, 1854, indicated some dissent from this view, repeating the arguments advanced by Hunt in his speech against the Nebraska bill. See above, p. 295.

earliest stage in the consideration of the bill.⁷⁷ It was even charged that Senator Bell's speech was intended to define his position acceptably to northern Whigs, since he was prominently mentioned as the Whig candidate for the next presidency.⁷⁸ His early connection, however, with the Douglas measure renders it improbable that he was actuated by any such motive. That certain of the southerners should prefer to continue in harmony with the northern leaders, provided that the measure furnished any basis for common action, was only natural. The vast majority, however, had no confidence in the northern wing as then constituted and had practically given up all hope of again acting with it. There was, therefore, absolutely no cooperation between the sectional wings of the party in Congress. Before there had been any debate or deliberation on the bill, the southern Whig senators had met in secret conclave with the old opponents of the party, as supporters of the proposed measure; they had even, without consultation with their northern brethren, held a separate caucus and authorized the announcement of their unanimity in favor of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise.⁷⁹ Every northern Whig,

⁷⁷ "The moment this bill was laid on our tables I conferred with some southern Whigs on its dangerous consequences, should it be forced upon the country." Senator Wade of Ohio on May 25, *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 764.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Nashville Republican Banner*, June 5, 1854.

⁷⁹ *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., Appendix, 940-948. Wade of Ohio, on the day before the final passage of the bill, explained the importance of the course of the southern Whigs: "I have no doubt that the southern Whigs of the Senate, before entering on a scheme so unjust to the North, had made up their minds to sever forever all further connection with their northern brethren. No doubt the question was asked, what shall we do with the northern Whigs? Shall we consult them, or shall we cut them off from this great empire behind their backs? Shall we consign their inheritance to slavery before they

however, in both houses, conservative as well as radical, had recorded his vote against this proposition.

With the two wings of the party so completely at odds and with the declining hold of the party spirit over the Whigs in both sections, the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska bill was the death-blow to the national Whig party. The Seward Whigs boldly repudiated all further connection with the Whigs of the South, who, they said, had rendered such connection impossible by having chosen "to join the common enemy in an unjust war upon the rights and honor of the North"; they accepted the issue tendered by the South, a sectional war for the mastery, and with agitation as the watchword, prepared for a desperate and deadly struggle between slavery and freedom.⁸⁰ Many of the northern conservatives, the "silver-grey" Whigs of New York and the nationalists of the other states, who had been warm and devoted friends of the South, now recognized that the day of compromises was ended by the Nebraska movement; they were forced by the character of the issue to abandon their southern friends, often to unite with the Sewardites.

The southern Whigs were placed by this development in an extremely delicate situation. They saw that they could no longer act with the northern wing,⁸¹ yet

know it? All these questions were answered in the affirmative. They must have made up their minds to sever all further political connection with us; and most effectively have they done it. After this I hope to hear no more of national parties. They have by their own act rendered such a thing impossible." *Ibid.*, 764.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 764-765. Cf. *Albany Register*, the organ of the Fillmore conservatives, in *Washington Union*, May 11; also *New York Tribune*, May 20, 1854.

⁸¹ The *Savannah Republican* as early as March 18 expressed the fear that this would be the result of the general opposition of northern Whigs to the bill.

they had no enthusiasm for the course on which the South had embarked. Nor were they as a body attracted to the Democratic party.⁸² In their quandary, the Florida central Whig organ, uncertain as to the ground upon which southern Whigs stood, asked the pointed question, "Where are we?" and suggested that the Whig party of Florida "meet and consult together for the purpose of taking an observation".⁸³

But the Petersburg *Intelligencer*, one of the most thorough Whig papers in the South, had already come forward with a significant suggestion. As it believed that the two sections of the party were utterly antagonistic and that further cooperation was an impossibility, it advised the holding of a southern Whig convention at some central point of the South "to consider of the policy and duty of the Whigs of the South". It thought that if southern Whigs acted independently of the Democrats except on the slavery question, they would be able to exercise a wholesome influence upon the political development of the South and of the nation.⁸⁴ While the proposal met with some approval from the

⁸² The Augusta *Constitutionalist* and the Savannah *Republican*, Whig journals in a state where Whig and Democrat had often cooperated, held that there were "discordant and irreconcilable elements of opinion", "antagonisms of principle and prejudice", that would prevent an amalgamation of southern Whigs and Democrats, even the Union Democrats. Thousands of Whigs, said the latter, "can never be brought to surrender up their judgments, or bow at the knees to the Gamaliel of Democracy, and take fresh lessons in the principles of the Government". Savannah *Republican*, June 29, 1854.

⁸³ Washington *Union*, June 30, 1854.

⁸⁴ "The holding of such a convention as we propose may be termed *sectional*. Well, let it be so. It is *sectional*, and *meant to be so*. What are the northern Whigs now doing? Acting *sectionally* for the purpose of *violating* the constitution. Look at their votes on the Nebraska bill, and then see if it will lie in their mouths to rebuke the Whigs of the South for holding a sectional convention to devise ways and means to protect the constitution from their own ruthless assaults." Quoted in Washington *Union*, June 3, 1854.

party press, the *Mobile Advertiser* was able, before all had expressed an opinion on the matter, to present a list of over fifteen prominent journals which were opposed to this scheme of sectionalizing the Whig party by driving out the northern Whigs, as "impolitic, uncalled for and mischievous".⁸⁵ And so, partly because of a revulsion against arranging the funeral rites of the defunct organization, partly through hope of its resurrection, the Whig party was refused extreme unction and the privilege of a decent burial.

Among the many who were opposed to the organization of the southern Whigs on a permanently sectional basis was Stephens of Georgia. He, too, believed that they must "strike out a lead for themselves", but he believed that it ought to be to secure a national organization "on broad national, Republican principles"—on the principles of the compromise of 1850 and the Kansas-Nebraska act just passed—to which the national men of both sections would be attracted: "Hundreds and thousands of Northern Whigs when they see this is our fixed determination will abandon the Seward ranks of the anti-slavery agitators. There is nothing that will tend so much to a speedy pacification of both parties North as a resolute purpose on our part to adhere to this course." He conferred with the other southern Whig members of Congress upon this plan and upon the political future.⁸⁶ To what extent he succeeded in securing their concurrence is uncertain, but later events show that such an expedient could hardly have accomplished the results for which Stephens hoped.

⁸⁵ July 1, 9, 1854.

⁸⁶ Stephens to Wm. M. Burwell, June 26, 27, 1854, Stephens MSS.

With Whig measures admittedly obsolete and with the Union issue removed from the field, little was left to distinguish Whig from Democrat even on the slavery question, except in the case of those who had laid themselves open to the charge of unsoundness. Even the editor of the New Orleans *Bulletin* became willing to admit that "the Whig party was killed off in November, 1852",⁸⁷ as the Democrats had charged at the time. But this admission did not come until there was a reasonable certainty that a new organization, made up mainly of the anti-Democratic opposition elements, had sufficiently taken form to warrant the belief that it could act as the fit successor of the Whig party. The new organization, which so suddenly came into strength and prominence, was a secret political party which developed out of a secret nativist order known to its members as the "Order of the Star Spangled Banner" or the "Order of the Sons of the Sires of '76". It was called the American party but, on account of the obligation of secrecy imposed upon its members concerning even the name, it came to be popularly and generally designated as the "Know Nothing" party.

⁸⁷ Oct. 18, 1854.

CHAPTER X.

ATTEMPTS AT REORGANIZATION, 1854-1861.

The Know Nothing party was a revived form of Native Americanism, a movement which had made considerable headway in the middle forties but which had gradually lost its force as the sectional issue came to occupy the center of the political arena. It was in its political aspect a protest against the part which the foreign-born citizen was allowed to play, whether legally or fraudulently, in the practical workings of the American political system.

Various considerations attracted the southern Whigs to the new organization, which for a time actually took the place of the old Whig party in the South. For one thing, there was in certain regions of the South an immigration problem of a character not unlike that of the north Atlantic seaboard. The states of the lower Mississippi valley and the southern border states in the valleys of the Potomac and Ohio rivers contained nearly ninety per cent of the foreign-born population of the South, and a large portion of the foreign immigrants were massed in the large cities, where they nearly equaled in numbers the native-born.¹ Inasmuch as many of the immigrants were persons of questionable physical, mental, or moral capacity, the expense of public charity was materially increased and the whole moral tone of those cities was lowered. The inevitable

¹ DeBow, *Compendium of the Seventh Census*, 118, 123, 399.

result was that citizens of Louisiana, Missouri, Maryland, and Kentucky played a conspicuous part in the nativist movement of the forties.

Two considerations of a more artificial character furnished a basis for nativism in the rest of the South where there was no considerable foreign population. One was the natural alignment of the political parties, the force which made Whig and Democrat take opposite sides no matter what the issue; the other was the spirit of sectionalism which made the South oppose arrangements that were primarily beneficial to the North. The latter, however, did not become a real factor in the development of political nativism until the last decade of the ante-bellum period. From the start, however, foreigners were not only attracted by the name of the Democratic party, which they almost invariably joined, but they found that they received but little sympathetic consideration from the Whig party, which was only too representative of the aristocratic elements of the nation. As the Whigs came to realize that the foreign-born voters probably held the balance of power and that their aid made inevitable Democratic success, they felt a strong attraction toward political nativism.² This party alignment on the problem of the treatment of the foreigner was evidenced in 1838 by the strictly party vote on the amendment to the preemption bill which proposed to exclude aliens from preemption rights. It was the determining motive in the Whig defence of the action of the nativists in

² "Such a mass of ignorance and passion thrown all on one side have a most dangerous influence when the parties in the country are nearly balanced, etc." A. Porter to Crittenden, Jan. 2, 1841, Crittenden MSS. Porter was a Whig ex-senator from Louisiana and favored a fourteen-year period for naturalization and stricter laws in general. Cf. Taylor to Crittenden, March 25, 1848, *ibid.*

the famous "Native American riots" which occurred in Philadelphia at the beginning of the campaign of 1844, in the outburst of Whig indignation against the foreign-born following Clay's defeat in that contest, and in the prompt and distinctly nativistic attempts under the leadership of the Whig senators from Louisiana and Virginia to secure legislation which would correct the deficiencies of the federal immigration policy and the errors of the naturalization system.

The possibility of a sectional basis for nativism was first indicated by the votes in the Senate in September, 1850, on the proposition to grant homestead rights to actual settlers in the territory of Oregon. Mason of Virginia, a Democrat, twice moved to amend the measure so as to exclude from the privilege foreigners who had merely declared their intention to become citizens; these amendments were both defeated on votes that were essentially sectional, although there were still some traces of the party line.⁸ In the first session of Congress under the Pierce administration the question of the treatment of the foreigner came up again in connection with the general homestead bill and the Nebraska territorial bill. Propositions were introduced by Clayton of Delaware and supported by the southern senators for the exclusion of unnaturalized foreigners from homestead rights and from the electoral franchise in the new territories. The homestead amendment was defeated on a purely sectional vote. The amendment to the Kansas-Nebraska bill, however, was at first passed in the Senate with every southern vote in its favor and every northern vote in the negative, but it was later sacrificed by that body, after its rejec-

⁸ *Senate Journal*, 31 Cong., 1 sess., 643-645.

tion in the House, in order that the bill itself might be saved.⁴

The debate on the homestead bill at times revealed the motives of the southern members, although most of them explained their position as the result of the feeling that native, or even naturalized citizens, who had rendered some service to the country, ought to be favored over the newly arrived aliens. "Is there a Southern man, who has a regard for his constituency, or the interests of the section which he represents", asked Thompson, a Whig senator from Kentucky, "who intends—as he knows it is a foregone conclusion that this is all to be free territory—to let them take it, and let them snatch it away from them, and say that men from the South are not to go into it, because they are tainted with a nigger? . . . I believe further that this measure may be injurious to the Southern States. They do not want to have foreigners around their plantations, injuring their children, and excluding them from a fair participation in the benefits of the common territory of the Union."⁵ Senator C. C. Clay, a Democrat from Alabama, who in 1838 had advocated a liberal and humane policy toward foreigners, and hence preemption rights for the foreign-born as well as for native Americans, now told the advocates of that policy that if the homestead bill passed unamended, they would see a powerful Native American party growing up in the southern states.⁶

The failure of the South to safeguard its interests in dealing with this situation brought out pointed com-

⁴ *Senate Journal*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 231-232, 234, 515-516.

⁵ *Cong. Globe*, 33 Cong., 1 sess., 947, 948.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 1705. Cf., however, Stephens to Wm. M. Burwell, May 7, 1854, Stephens MSS.

ments from the southern Whig press. While the bills were still pending, a Washington correspondent of the *Baltimore Sun* had pointed out the danger that without the proviso in the Nebraska bill excluding aliens from the right to vote "the South must assent to being *voted out* in the new Territories, or must turn against the bill and kill it". By the homestead bill, moreover, he said, "We shall give away the domain to foreign immigrants as fast as they come into the country, so as to render certain the exclusion of the slaveholders from it".⁷ The *Mobile Advertiser* condemned the inclination of some southern Democrats to exult on old party grounds when the Clayton amendment was struck out by the House. "If the bill passes as it now stands", it declared, "we see nothing to prevent the Northern Freesoilers from forwarding the first half-dozen shiploads of emigrants that may arrive thereafter at the Northern ports directly to Nebraska and Kansas, where they can easily fix the character of both Territories, as far as slavery is concerned, for all time."⁸ The *Mill-edgeville Southern Recorder* also believed that southern institutions could not get a foothold if foreigners were allowed to control the ballot-box.⁹

This new issue in the sectional controversy was especially important because it was raised just at the time that a revived nativist movement gave promise of considerable success. The coincidence was a significant one. The period of the early fifties, following the unsuccessful revolutionary movements of 1848 in Europe, brought an unprecedented flood of foreign

⁷ *National Intelligencer*, March 8, 14, 1854.

⁸ May 28, 1854.

⁹ *National Intelligencer*, June 7, 1854.

immigration and with it an increase of the evils attendant upon such an exodus from the old world. Inasmuch, moreover, as immigrant agents in Europe cautioned the deformed, crippled, and otherwise defective emigrants to take ships that would carry them to one of the southern ports where the provisions for prohibiting their landing were not so stringent,¹⁰ the southern states must have received a fair share of the undesirable immigrants. Many of the new arrivals, also, were political exiles from their native lands. They began at once to organize by establishing political clubs in the large cities. In January, 1852, a German Revolutionary Congress met at Philadelphia attended by delegates from several local Revolutionary Unions.¹¹ In 1854, an association of "Free Germans" was formed "for the purpose of being able to exercise a power proportionate to their numbers and adapted to their principles", with headquarters in Louisville and branches in all the principal cities of the Union.¹² These organizations were criticized because of their radical political, religious, and social doctrines, many of their members being atheists, socialists, and agrarians. But what particularly concerned southerners, especially members of the Whig party, was their hostility to southern institutions. These foreigners, ready with expressions of sympathy for the negro, denounced slavery as a "political and moral cancer", protested against its extension into any new territory, and advocated the gradual extermination of slavery in the several states.

¹⁰ Sanderson, *Republican Landmarks*, 80.

¹¹ *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 6, March 1, 1852.

¹² *Id.*, April 27; *St. Louis Intelligencer*, April 16, 1854.

The fiery wave of nativism that swept over the North in 1853 and 1854 found fuel for a steady but hot glow when it crossed the ineffective barriers of Mason and Dixon's line. Arriving in the form of a secret political organization which concealed even its name and existence and holding up the high ideal of protecting American institutions from the "insidious wiles of foreigners", it made a strong appeal to southern Whigs who, in the transition state of politics following the breakdown of their national organization, felt quite like men without a party. To them it promised a powerful and irresistible reorganization of the opposition. The Know Nothing party, therefore, soon became the opposition party in the South.

There was first a prompt revival of nativism in its old strongholds. In New Orleans and St. Louis, and later in Washington, Nashville, Baltimore and other southern cities, Whig cooperation made possible important victories in the local elections.¹⁸ Soon Know Nothingism had more than a local existence in these southern cities. At a preliminary national convention of the order on May 14, 1854, southern delegations were present from Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Exactly one month later, when the organization of the movement was completed by the establishment of a Grand Council for the United States and by the adoption of a constitution and a ritual, representatives of additional councils in Georgia and Alabama aided in the work. The Louisiana organization maintained an existence independent of the na-

¹⁸ New Orleans *Bulletin*, March 29, Nov. 28; St. Louis *Intelligencer*, Aug. 1, 2, 7; Nashville *Republican Banner*, Oct. 2, 3, 4; Savannah *Republican*, Dec. 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 12; Milledgeville *Southern Recorder*, Dec. 5, 1854.

tional order. In the fall the "Americans" in Delaware elected their candidates for governor and congressmen as well as an overwhelming majority of the legislature.¹⁴ In November the National Council at Cincinnati brought the ritual into final form, adding among other things the third or "Union" degree, so called because it pledged members upon oath to the support of the Union and to opposition to all who aimed to destroy or subvert it. This degree was proposed and urged by Kenneth Rayner of North Carolina, a former Whig, who aimed to arrest disunion sentiment in the South and abolitionism in the North.¹⁵ It became very popular with former Whigs in the slaveholding states.

The southern Democratic press condemned Know Nothingism from the start, charging it with being either an attempt to continue the old Whig party under an *alias* or a new organization to perpetuate Whig principles.¹⁶ Most Whigs, indeed, and many Democrats felt an irresistible attraction to the order. Its novelty, its secrecy and mystery helped to make thousands of converts. The nativist movement claimed to herald an era of political reform which should rid the country of the corruption that had crept into high places, which should substitute devotion to the Union of the fathers for slavish devotion to party and for the control of the professional politician.¹⁷ Another consideration that commended the American movement

¹⁴ P. F. Causey to Clayton, Nov. 23, 1854, Clayton MSS.

¹⁵ Wilson, *Rise and Fall of the Slave Power*, II, 420-422.

¹⁶ Houston *Southern Argus*, July 26; Vicksburg *Sentinel*, April 29; Kosciusko *Southern Sun*, April 1, July 15, 29; Mobile *Register*, in Mobile *Advertiser*, June 6, 1854.

¹⁷ Savannah *Republican*, June 12, 15, Dec. 4; Mobile *Advertiser*, June 30; Wm. C. Rives to Burwell, Nov. 12, 1854, Burwell MSS.; G. W. Mitchell to A. H. H. Stuart, June 20, 1854, Stuart MSS.

with peculiar force to the Whigs of the South was the fear harbored by southerners since the introduction of the Kansas-Nebraska bill in Congress, that the foreigners, especially the Germans, came to this country instinctively prejudiced against slavery and that they would take a prominent part in the anti-slavery movement of the future. This apprehension was now confirmed by news from the North.¹⁸ The American party, on the other hand, had given assurances of being "sound" on the slavery question. It gave promise of being a really national party at a time when there was an especial need of one.

The state elections of 1855 were to test the real strength of the organization. In the critical contest in Virginia, the first election of the year, Flournoy, a former Whig leader and the American candidate for governor, made a fatal mistake by proclaiming, in his letter accepting the nomination, his desire to see members of the Roman Catholic church "excluded from the offices of the government in all its departments".¹⁹ In this he did not reflect the views of the Know Nothings in the South, where the American party did not display that anti-Catholic feature which was so characteristic of nativism in the North. Flournoy and the Know Nothing leaders, however, refused to take the stump in his defence and the bold aggressiveness of the Democratic candidate, in an acrimonious and ex-

¹⁸ See Von Holst, *Constitutional History*, IV, 429, note. The *Illinois Staats Zeitung*, Sept. 20, issued an appeal for a Republican party, a great American "Liberty Party". *Missouri Republican*, Sept. 25, 1854.

¹⁹ Hambleton, *Virginia Politics in 1855*, 170. The "Basis Principles of the American Party in Virginia", however, made no mention of Catholics but asserted the "American doctrine of religious toleration" and reprobated "all proscription for opinion's sake". *Ibid.*, 210.

citing canvass, succeeded in fixing upon Know Nothingism the imputation of intolerance and of prescribing a religious test as a qualification for office, a charge which was never satisfactorily refuted in this Virginia campaign. As a result the Democrats won a victory with the usual majority despite the confidence of the opposition.²⁰

The moral effect of the Virginia defeat on former Democrats who had joined the American order was disastrous to the cause in the other states. There the elections resulted in the success of the Democratic state tickets except in Kentucky and Maryland, but the Know Nothings elected quotas of the legislatures and of the congressional delegations fully proportionate to the Whig strength of previous years. Tennessee chose a Democratic governor, reelecting Andrew Johnson over Gentry, a former Whig, but the Know Nothings elected a bare majority of both houses of the legislature and a majority of the congressional delegation.

The strength of the American party in the South lay in its supposed unity as a national organization and in its exploitation of the effect of the unprecedented foreign immigration upon sectional relations. It pointed to the large foreign-born population of the North to which the immigrant came with strongly preconceived anti-slavery inclinations. The North already had over fifty more representatives in Congress than the South. At the existing rate of apportionment, the tide of immigration was increasing the population of the northern states to an extent that would entitle that section to five additional members every year. It was even stated

²⁰ Hambleton, 410-420; J. L. Newby to Crittenden, May 12, 1855, Crittenden MSS.

that the foreign vote would soon be as large as the vote of the South.²¹

The Native Americans in the southern states, on the other hand, pointed with pride to a sincere desire on the part of the northern members of their party to put down the slavery agitation. The ratification of the Union degree by most northern councils was cited as overwhelming proof of the nationality of the party.²² In the National Council of June, 1855, a southerner, E. B. Bartlett of Kentucky, was elected head of the order. A platform was also adopted containing the famous twelfth section, which, after deploring all further agitation of the slavery question and arguing that peace and the Union could best be preserved by maintaining the existing laws upon the subject of slavery as a final settlement, declared that Congress had no power to legislate upon that subject in the states, and ought not in the territories or in the District of Columbia. This was an extreme concession to the South; it was, indeed, all that the strongest pro-slavery men had demanded. Yet they forced it through, though it resulted in the secession of a large number of northern delegates headed by Henry Wilson of Massachusetts.²³ The southern wing rejoiced sincerely at this result; it held up the platform as a model one for the guarantee of southern rights.

The dissolution of the Whig party to make possible combined action by Whigs and Know Nothings against

²¹ *Nashville Republican Banner*, June 23; *Mobile Advertiser*, Aug. 2; *Savannah Republican*, Aug. 21, 1855.

²² *Nashville Republican Banner*, May 8, 26, 1855.

²³ Proceedings from *New York Herald*, in *Savannah Republican*, June 11-19; from *New York Express*, in *National Intelligencer*, June 13-16, 1855. Cf. A. T. Burnley to Crittenden, June 12, 1855, Crittenden MSS.

the Democrats transferred most of the southern Whigs to the Know Nothing ranks; many of them, however, took advantage of the release of the old ties to connect themselves with the Democratic party. Stephens and Toombs took this occasion to complete the shift that had begun several years before. Among others who eventually took the same course was Senator Benjamin of Louisiana. All were received with open arms by their former opponents, who welcomed this accession to replace those lost by defection to the American party. Many Whigs, however, though cooperating with the Democrats in opposing Know Nothingism, held aloof from a new affiliation and often asserted that they were as good Whigs as ever and would always remain such. Others, such as senators Jones of Tennessee and Benjamin of Louisiana, and Charles J. Jenkins of Georgia, had for a time visions of a great southern party upon a platform for the protection of southern rights similar to that of the Georgia convention of 1850.²⁴

Many of the Whigs who went into the American party repeatedly stated that their principles had thereby undergone no change. "We counsel not the abandonment of a single Whig tenet", the Richmond *Whig* had declared on taking up the movement, "but only urge a course which will effectually expel the Goths and Vandals, and ultimately, perhaps immediately, result in putting Whig measures and Whig policy in the

²⁴ Jones to W. Chaffin, etc., July 8, Nashville *Republican Banner*, July 17; Benjamin to J. F. Freret, etc., Aug. 3, New Orleans *Bulletin*, Aug. 3; Jenkins to —, June 15, Savannah *Republican*, June 20, 1855.

An abortive attempt in Georgia to put some of these ideas into practice, however, resulted in a flat failure. *Id.*, June 21; Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, June 6, 1855.

ascendant.”²⁵ From this point of view it was considered wrong to regard the Whig party as dead when, as Berrien stated, it had only abstained as a party from entering the contest. It was now confidently expected by some that a demand would soon arise for its resuscitation. But with former Whigs divided into Democrats, “outside Whigs”, anti-Know Nothings, and Know Nothings, the possibility of effective reorganization was, indeed, a slight one. Senator Bell of Tennessee therefore urged in a speech at Knoxville that the American party should be regarded as a permanent party, the successor of the defunct Whig organization.²⁶

Preparations were soon begun for the coming presidential election. By this time, however, the northern and the southern wings of the American party were growing more and more out of sympathy. The twelfth section of the Philadelphia platform of the previous June had been repudiated in many of the northern states, and even moderate leaders were coming to the conclusion that differences of opinion should be tolerated upon such local and sectional questions as slavery. A large number of Americans in the border states of the South also felt from past experience that it was wise not to make agreement on the slavery question a test of party orthodoxy but to avoid controversy by “agreeing to disagree”.²⁷ In the lower South, however, the American state conventions adopted advanced positions regarding slavery, declaring that Congress had no right to legislate on slavery in the territories,

²⁵ Jan. 3, 1855, in Hambleton, *Virginia Politics in 1855*, 44-45; see also *Mobile Advertiser*, Aug. 17, 1855.

²⁶ *Nashville Republican Banner*, Oct. 21, 1855.

²⁷ *Id.*, Jan. 11, 18, 19, etc., 1856.

repudiating the doctrine of squatter sovereignty, and declaring that there must be no step backward from the Georgia platform.²⁸ Such action must be interpreted as an attempt to assume ground that would attract local support rather than as an ultimatum to the northern Know Nothings, although this was exactly what the Georgia resolutions purported to be. The moral, moreover, to be deduced from the part played by the northern and the southern members of the American party in the contest over the speakership in December and January confirmed the hopelessness of agreement on the subject of slavery.

The national nominating convention in February, 1856, was immediately preceded by a National Council which discarded the platform of the previous June for a new one which avoided an explicit expression of the party's views on slavery but which was generally favorable to the South. In the convention, the anti-slavery element made so desperate an effort to reject the platform of the Council, on the ground that the Council had no authority to adopt it, that the disruption of the convention was feared and many of the southern delegates were on the point of withdrawing. After the efforts of the northerners failed and a number of them had left the convention, Fillmore and Donelson were harmoniously agreed upon as the candidates of the American party.²⁹

The nomination of Fillmore should have been popular in the South. His supporters had been bitterly disappointed at his rejection by the Whig convention

²⁸ *Mobile Advertiser*, Nov. 24; *Savannah Republican*, Dec. 22, 1855.

²⁹ Proceedings in *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, Feb. 19-26; cf. *Savannah Republican*, Feb. 25-27; *Nashville Republican Banner*, Feb. 26-28; *Mobile Advertiser*, March 5, April 4, 1856.

of 1852 and had then determined that he should be the standard-bearer against the Democracy in the next contest.⁸⁰ He had made a tour of the southern states in the spring of 1854 and had been given an enthusiastic reception at all his stopping-places. He was, indeed, almost the only person mentioned by southern Whigs and Americans in connection with the presidency. But for some time there was in the South a certain coolness regarding the American ticket and platform. The usual ratification meetings were held but regular state conventions often delayed action until further developments or until the results of the other national conventions could be learned. This was in part due to the fact that the American party, almost from its beginning as a national organization and most notably so in the February convention, had been torn to dissension by the most unrelenting and invincible adversary of harmony and union, sectionalism, the force that had prostrated and destroyed the Whig party. As the American party had wrapped its opinions on the slavery question in equivocation in order to avoid a direct schism, the extremists on either side were unsatisfied.⁸¹

Fillmore was in Europe at the time of his nomination and there was a good deal of uncertainty in regard to his opinions. He was believed to have opposed the repeal of the Missouri Compromise two years before and it was now feared that he advocated its restoration. The arrival of his letter of acceptance,⁸² however, and the news of his famous Albany speech increased his prospects in the South. In the latter, which he deliv-

⁸⁰ *Savannah Republican*, Aug. 12; *Knoxville Whig*, Nov. 27, 1852.

⁸¹ *Mobile Advertiser*, March 25, 26, May 2, July 2, 1856.

⁸² *Richmond Whig*, June 12; *Savannah Republican*, June 16, 1856.

ered promptly upon his return from abroad, he advocated the integrity of the republic and justice to the South and came out in bold language against a sectional party. This was a satisfactory answer to Fremont's nomination by the Republican party of the North and his words were carefully copied by the party press in the southern states. The nomination of the Democratic candidate by the Cincinnati convention, even so favorable a one as Buchanan, only aroused the traditional animosity of former Whigs against their party opponents. The leading arguments of the Americans in the South were that Fillmore, who rejected the heresy of squatter sovereignty, was the only sound candidate and the standard-bearer of the only sound party on the subject of slavery and in devotion to the constitution and the Union; that the safety of the republic depended on his success, since Buchanan was much too weak in the North to prevent Fremont's election; that it was for the South to decide whether it was to be a sectional contest between Buchanan and Fremont or one in which Fillmore, a national candidate, should oppose the nominee of the "Black Republicans". The weakness of these arguments was apparent on the surface but it was hardly expected that Fillmore would receive a majority of the electoral votes. It was hoped that the election would be thrown into the House of Representatives, where it was thought that Fillmore's chances were better than those of either Buchanan or Fremont.

But there was a strong feeling in the South that Fillmore could not be elected under any circumstances. There was, therefore, danger that a division of the vote of the South would make possible the election of

Fremont—that a vote for Fillmore would virtually mean a vote for the Republican candidate.³³ This was the leading argument of the southern Democrats; it was so diligently applied during the whole campaign as to make many a Fillmore organ wince under its forcefulness. This argument made it the imperative duty in the eyes of many southern Whigs and Americans to abandon Fillmore to take up the support of Buchanan. The latter was admittedly a strong and popular candidate in the South and, as it was a case of voting on the strongest side to guarantee the defeat of that “sectional, dangerous, and unprincipled combination called the Republican party”, the odds were in favor of a Democratic victory.

Accordingly, many old-line Whigs, some of whom had thus far cooperated with the Americans, now made their way into the ranks of the Buchanan party and bade a final farewell to their old associations. The most prominent Whigs in Maryland took this course—Senators Pratt and Pearce and two of their predecessors, Merrick and Reverdy Johnson. A host of others all over the South came to the same decision, among them, Jones of Tennessee, Benjamin of Louisiana, Preston and James B. Clay of Kentucky, and Jenkins of Georgia. It was in vain that certain Whig presses changed their tone and now declared that Fremont could not be elected in any contingency, that the contest was one between Buchanan and Fillmore.³⁴ Only Bell, Crittenden, Graham, Mangum, and a few others of the old guard in the South took the stump for Fillmore and Donelson.

³³ See *New Orleans Bulletin*, June 7, 13; *Richmond Whig*, Aug. 26, 1856.

³⁴ *Savannah Republican*, Oct. 21; *Mobile Advertiser*, Oct. 16; *Memphis Enquirer*, in *National Intelligencer*, Oct. 13.

There was a slight movement for Whig reorganization both before and during the campaign. This was strongest in the border states, especially in Missouri, Kentucky, Maryland, and Virginia. But it was a failure so far as attempting separate political action was concerned. The national Whig convention, which finally met at Baltimore in September and passed resolutions to support Fillmore and Donelson, was largely made up of men who were already actively in the field in support of them as the nominees of the American party.³⁵ This convention, indeed, was known to be largely a movement engineered to create new capital in their favor among former Whigs who were still in doubt; its result had been a foregone conclusion.

Everything pointed to Democratic success in the South; indeed, November placed all the southern states, except Maryland, which gave its eight electoral votes to Fillmore, in the Democratic column. With, however, nearly a half million votes in the South for Fillmore there was evidence that the opposition to the Democratic party, in the past so long identified with Whiggery, had not yet sunk to proportions that left it without political significance. It was noticeable, however, that the Democrats made their most important gains in the interior or agricultural districts, while the opposition held majorities in many of the important cities of the South.³⁶ The result was accepted with grace by the Whigs and the Americans. They did not fail to point out, however, that it was the beginning of the end, that the solution of the problem of the permanency of the Union was but postponed to the next presidential

³⁵ Proceedings in *National Intelligencer*, Sept. 20; see *id.*, Sept. 18, 19; *Baltimore Patriot*, Sept. 18, 19.

³⁶ See *New Orleans Bulletin*, Nov. 26, 1856.

election. The opposition still assumed the guardianship of the nation against the foes of conservatism and of compromise.

At the opening of Buchanan's administration conditions in the South seemed auspicious for the inauguration of an era of good feeling. A president occupied the executive chair who had been elected to that position partly through the suffrages of many who had hitherto been identified with the opposition. Southern Whigs and Americans hoped, therefore, that he might by a prudent and conciliatory management of public affairs win the favor of citizens generally, regardless of their party affiliations; that the conservative element recently infused into the Democracy might work out a result generally beneficial to it and to the nation. Henry W. Hilliard of Alabama undertook to explain this view in announcing his support of the Democratic administration. He commended the tone of Buchanan's inaugural and praised the policy outlined. The administration, he believed, stood as a bulwark for the defence of southern rights; he felt that it "ought to be sustained by the '*undivided South*'". . . . "*An undivided South as the base of a great constitutional party, embracing the conservative men of all sections, is what I desire to see.*"⁸⁷ This ideal of the unity of the South found many such advocates even outside of the Democratic ranks,⁸⁸ to the great detriment of the opposition organization there.

But not all could be satisfied with a Democracy and with a Democratic administration which A. J. Donelson

⁸⁷ Hilliard to editors of *National Intelligencer*, issue of June 2, 1857; see also Hilliard, *Politics and Pen Pictures*, 276-277.

⁸⁸ *National Intelligencer*, June 6, 1857.

and Jeremiah Clemens, themselves ex-Democrats, denounced as a "sham", the "miscalled Democracy". Soon the traditional party animosity broke out again. This time the attempt was made to revive the old Whig organization. For it was recognized that the American party was impotent and could not handle the situation. The American national convention meeting at Louisville in vain attempted to adapt its organization to a recovery of its lost strength.³⁹

The natural demand for a Whig revival was set in motion by an address of a number of prominent New Orleans Whigs "To the People of Louisiana", which showed the basis for and the need of a reorganization of the conservatives under their original banner.⁴⁰ The old Whig organs were stirred to enthusiasm by this proposal, to which they gave their hearty endorsement. "The country needs the reorganization of the Whig party", declared the New Orleans *Bulletin*. "By holding the balance of power, which it can at least do by such organization, it can exercise a powerful conservative influence, of which the country now stands in perilous need."⁴¹ There seemed to be a logical foundation for the proposed Whig reorganization. As the *National Intelligencer* announced, "The platform . . . of the 'American' and 'Republican' parties is too narrow for a liberal and national Whig to stand on, while to the theory and administration of the Democratic party there must ever remain much that is repulsive to one who has been thoroughly imbued with the principles of a Clay and a Webster".⁴²

³⁹ Proceedings in *National Intelligencer*, June 6; cf. *id.*, July 15.

⁴⁰ *Id.*, June 23, 1857.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*; cf. editorials cited, *ibid.*

The movement, however, met with but a faint response from those who had been formerly affiliated with the Whig organization. The optimists and visionaries, to be sure, did not appreciate that the Whig party was beyond the sound of the trump of resurrection. But the others realized that its political ground in the South had been taken by the American party; that on sectional questions there was little substantial difference between the two existing parties at the South; that there was, accordingly, little basis for Whig reorganization. Meantime the American party was steadily losing ground in the South, where the state elections revealed it in a decided minority in every state except Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Delaware.

Those interested in building up an effective opposition to the Democracy, however, clutched at every ray of hope that seemed to encourage them in their gloomy cause. They beheld with satisfaction a growing favor in the South for the old scheme of distributing the proceeds of the public land sales among all the states, this new interest being stimulated by an increasing sectional jealousy of the land grants for railroad enterprises in the northwestern states. Then came the panic of 1857, a financial tornado which left behind a trail of ruin and destruction. Its effect was for a time to divert the public mind from the sectional issue to the problem of meeting this emergency.⁴³ Among the remedies suggested for financial and commercial recovery were the old Whig measures, the national bank and the protective tariff. At once the optimists urged the alignment of parties on these old issues, as a neces-

⁴³ New Orleans *Delta*, Oct. 24, in *National Intelligencer*, Nov. 7; cf. *id.*, Nov. 7, 9, 1857.

sary and desirable basis. The results of the past financial experiences, it was said, pointed to the need of a national bank. A higher and more protective tariff was urged as the condition of economic recovery and future prosperity.⁴⁴ With these old issues revived, it was argued that "the Benjamins, the Toombses, the Stephenses, and Clingmans, still adhering to their constitutional theories as Whigs of '37, '41, and '42, could no longer cooperate with the Democratic party in the South."⁴⁵

The hopes for an effective reorganization of the opposition were encouraged by the growing disorganization of the Democratic party. The official journal of the administration admitted that the party was in more or less danger of becoming "a mere piece of mosaic, 'a bit of white stone here and a black stone there'—a species of hydra of many heads, composed of 'many men of many minds'".⁴⁶ It was criticized by an opponent as "a conglomeration of odds and ends which *bears nothing good but a name*".⁴⁷ The schism in the early months of 1858, over the admission of Kansas under the Lecompton constitution, definitely divided that party into two hostile camps. Douglas and his followers differed widely from Buchanan and

⁴⁴ *Richmond Whig*, Oct. 29, 1857; cf. *National Intelligencer*, June 23, Nov. 2, 1858. In the caucus of Democratic senators in January and February, 1859, certain southern senators of this anti-high tariff party favored an increase in the tariff as absolutely necessary, *id.*, Feb. 1, 7, 8, 1859.

⁴⁵ *New Orleans Delta*, Oct. 27, 1857.

⁴⁶ *National Intelligencer*, Oct. 13, 1858. See also *Washington States*, Jan. 26, 1859, in *Mobile Advertiser*, Feb. 5.

⁴⁷ *Savannah Republican*, May 26; cf. March 23, May 28, 1859.

Part of the Louisiana Democracy broke away from the element in control there and under ex-Senator Soulé boldly condemned the methods of the regulars. *National Intelligencer*, April 14, 1859.

the rest of the party in their interpretation of the workings of popular sovereignty.

The attitude of the southern opposition to the situation in Kansas was essentially moderate and conservative from the beginning of the struggle there. While all southerners zealously supported the cause of winning it as a slave state, all violent means of securing this end were earnestly deplored and condemned,⁴⁸ and the disorder in bleeding Kansas was held up, in contrast with the language of Pierce's inaugural, as the result of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the establishment of the doctrine of squatter sovereignty.⁴⁹ In 1858, a large majority of the southern opposition opposed the adoption of the Lecompton constitution; Senator Crittenden of Kentucky came out against it in a powerful speech which was almost universally approved by the Americans and the Whigs of the South.⁵⁰

This situation increased the prospect of uniting the conservative men of every name and of both sections into a party having for its basis the entire overthrow of the Democracy.⁵¹ The leaders arranged to confer in preparation for the formation of a conservative, national, Union party, the movement being engineered principally by Nathan Sargent, representing the northern conservatives.⁵² Accordingly, in December, 1858, representative opposition men from thirteen states held

⁴⁸ *New Orleans Bulletin*, Sept. 5, 1855, Sept. 11, 1856; *Savannah Republican*, March 1, April 1, 1856; *Mobile Advertiser*, June 13, 1856.

⁴⁹ *Cf.* *Nashville Republican Banner*, Sept. 12, 1856.

⁵⁰ Dozens of letters poured in on Crittenden from the opposition leaders praising the stand he had taken and endorsing the sentiments he had expressed. Crittenden MSS.

⁵¹ Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, II, 147.

⁵² Sargent to A. H. H. Stuart, Oct. 31, 1858, Stuart MSS.

a conference at Washington to discuss the situation.⁵³ The plan was to nominate conservative candidates for the contest of 1860, such as the Republicans could "neither get over nor around, ignore, nor object to", thus to detach the conservatives of that party.⁵⁴

This purpose of drawing on the Republican party to fill the ranks of the new organization received the support of a number of southern conservatives. They suggested that there was now no slavery question to divide the opposition, that each section should be allowed to hold its own views on that subject, and that the contest be made upon practical issues without involving the slavery agitation.⁵⁵ In their growing hatred of the Democracy they had lost some of their bitterness against the Republicans. The *Richmond Whig*, September 30, 1859, pledged the Whigs of Virginia "to support Seward a thousand times sooner than any Democrat, Northern or Southern, in the land". Imagining anti-slavery Republicanism on the wane, they hoped that the moderate Republicans could take a prominent place in a broad opposition movement. "If the Black Republican party eschew sectional issues and have become national and conservative in their action", argued the son of Henry Clay, "why should not all true Americans unite with it to cleanse the Augean stable at Washington and to purify the country from this baneful influence?"⁵⁶ Republican leaders were showing exactly such moderation. Abraham Lincoln in a speech

⁵³ *New York Tribune*, Dec. 11, 17; *National Intelligencer*, Dec. 20, 1858.

⁵⁴ Sargent to A. H. H. Stuart, Feb. 18, 27, 1859, Stuart MSS.

⁵⁵ *Mobile Advertiser*, Feb. 19, Aug. 17, 1859; cf. *National Intelligencer*, Sept. 16, 20.

⁵⁶ Thos. H. Clay to Crittenden, June 24, 1858, Crittenden MSS.; see also *New Orleans Bee*, Oct. 27, 1857.

at Cincinnati indicated a preference for a southern man at either end of the presidential ticket, explaining that "the proslavery party must be shown that the Republicans, in opposing the aggrandizement of slavery, were friends of the Union and promoters of the general public good".⁵⁷ Henry W. Davis of Maryland expressed the opinion of many southerners when, in a speech in September, 1859, accepting a nomination to Congress, he urged the necessity of a union of the opposition, North and South, for the overthrow of the party in power, and of cooperation in the presidential campaign and in national politics without attempting to set up any platforms or tests of orthodoxy.⁵⁸

The reorganization movement was taken up in several states of the South with considerable enthusiasm. At first it was treated as a Whig revival but it was later found expedient to give the movement a name implying a wider scope. Most of the American state organizations abandoned their name and existence and prepared to cooperate in the cause of the "Opposition". This included, of necessity, the old-line Whigs, Know Nothings, the dissatisfied Democrats,⁵⁹ and the conservative Republicans. In the South proper, however, little was said of the connection of the latter with the movement.

Virginia was expected to set the pace for her sister southern states. A rousing opposition state convention early in February adopted a full state ticket and a vigorous platform. An exciting gubernatorial contest was opened with Goggin opposing Letcher, the Demo-

⁵⁷ *National Intelligencer*, Sept. 22, 1859.

⁵⁸ *Id.*, Sept. 24, 1859.

⁵⁹ The recusant Louisiana Democrats finally resolved to cooperate with the opposition throughout the state. *Id.*, Sept. 2, 1859.

cratic candidate.⁶⁰ The result was close and, although another Democratic victory, it showed a wonderful increase in the strength of the opposition and was a source of great encouragement to the cause there and elsewhere.⁶¹ There was in every state a bustling activity on the part of the opposition which busied itself with organizing for the control of the local contests. Alabama alone had no opposition ticket in the field. In Tennessee, Kentucky, and North Carolina, important gains were made. The Democratic majority in the Tennessee legislature was cut down to a mere handful and the opposition gained four members of Congress; in Kentucky, two congressional seats were recovered from the Democracy; while the North Carolina opposition added three members of Congress to its representation, thus securing one-half of the delegation. Throughout the South generally the opposition made material gains in its voting strength.

The reorganizers in Virginia, under the influence of A. H. H. Stuart, prepared to follow up the gains which they had made. A call was issued by the state central committee for a state convention "preliminary to a National Convention intended to be held hereafter, with the view of collecting, and harmonizing, and organizing the conservative Union sentiments of the country".⁶² This was, of course, the chief aim of the movement—to build up a national party which should succeed to the strong position and influence of the old Whig organization. Several persons were prominently mentioned as fit candidates for the presidential nomination of such

⁶⁰ *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 9, 14, 23, 1859; cf. N. Sargent to A. H. H. Stuart, Feb. 18, 1859, Stuart MSS.

⁶¹ *Richmond Whig*, July 15, in *National Intelligencer*, July 19, 1859.

⁶² *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 26, 27, 30, 1859.

a movement. Virginia had her favorite son, John M. Botts, a leader of vigor and generous in his allowances for differences of opinion on the slavery question. Besides him, Bell of Tennessee, Crittenden of Kentucky, and Edward Bates of Missouri were considered in this connection. The first two were leaders of long established and national reputations; Bates had for a time special claims to consideration. Coming from a state where slavery existed he was moderately opposed to an extension of that institution; indeed, his views on this subject closely resembled those of Henry Clay. He was, therefore, often classified as a moderate Republican. He believed in a broad opposition movement which should include the good men of all parties, even Republicans.⁶³ He was the favorite of all the opposition elements in his state, and was supported by many outside who felt that if he was nominated by the conservative opposition, it would rob the rabid Republicans of their strength and most probably compel that party to endorse his nomination.⁶⁴

Thus far the reawakening of the opposition had been regarded primarily as an anti-Democratic movement, aiming to expel the Democrats from the control of the federal and state governments. Indeed, even the opposition press of the lower South had become favorable to some sort of cooperation with the "Constitutional Republicans" of the North. A leading object of the southern opposition was to secure an abandonment of the slavery issue in national politics; it claimed that the slavery controversy had by this time reached a

⁶³ Bates to Hon. Jeremiah Clemens, etc., *id.*, Aug. 31, 1859.

⁶⁴ N. Sargent to A. H. H. Stuart, Feb. 18, Nov. 17, 1859, Stuart MSS.

proper termination.⁶⁵ It was pointed out that the Republican party in the North was in the habit of using the slavery question for effect there just as the Democrats did in the South, that the Republicans were not as fanatically devoted to the anti-slavery cause as was supposed.⁶⁶ Many believed that there were thousands of conservatives in the Republican party of the North who could properly be drawn into a conservative national opposition organization.⁶⁷

But suddenly, as a result of John Brown's raid upon Harper's Ferry in October, 1859, the sectional agitation broke loose again and to the Republican party was assigned a large share of the blame for the unfortunate incident. The southern Democrats made full use of the occasion to depict the dangerous situation in which their section was placed, and, although the conservative leaders tried to allay the excitement,⁶⁸ many of the rank and file and even some of the leaders refused to be calmed. Instead, they increased their hatred of the Republican party and of the North. That famous *émeute* removed all basis for the union of the whole opposition of both sections on a single presidential candidate.

When Congress met in December, the organization of

⁶⁵ *National Intelligencer*, Sept. 6, Oct. 8; *Mobile Advertiser*, Aug. 24; *Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor*, May 26, 1859.

⁶⁶ *Savannah Republican*, April 18; *Mobile Advertiser*, May 11, 1859.

⁶⁷ The *Savannah Republican*, April 29, after explaining the object of the opposition, declared that there were in the Republican party "many true and patriotic men who have been seduced into error by the excitement of the times, or have gone into it involuntarily as the only mode of effective opposition to a party whose whole history has proved it inimical to the best interests of the country". Cf. *id.*, Jan. 29, May 4, July 26, 1859.

⁶⁸ Cf. *National Intelligencer*, Dec. 5-8; *Mobile Advertiser*, Nov. 5; *Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor*, Dec. 17, 24, 1859; etc.

the House was delayed by the lack of a majority on the part of any of the political groups into which it was divided. During the contest, the foundations for a new Union party were laid under the leadership of Senator Crittenden. The new organization was to occupy the middle ground between the Democratic and Republican parties, opposing the anti-slavery passions of the one and the anti-Union tendencies of the other.⁶⁹ A meeting of the southern opposition members of Congress and of other conservative leaders was held on the nineteenth of December and arrangements were made to confer with the central committees of the Whig and the American organizations.⁷⁰ Within five days the call for a National Union convention was sanctioned by the combined forces which made up the conservative opposition.

The contest over the speakership resulted, after a struggle of two months, in the election of Pennington of New Jersey, an old-line Whig, who had just become a moderate Republican, but who was not the regular candidate of that party. Henry W. Davis of Maryland contributed his vote to Pennington's election, and, although his course met with some criticism, it was fully endorsed in at least one meeting of his constituents, who prefaced their resolutions by the phrase "southern slaveholders as we are".⁷¹ Indeed, sentiment on the subject of Pennington's election furnishes clear evidence of the conservatism of the southern opposition and of the ultraism of the southern Democratic fire-eaters.⁷²

⁶⁹ Crittenden to S. S. Nicholas, Jan. 29, 1860, Crittenden MSS.

⁷⁰ *National Intelligencer*, Dec. 23, 24, 26, 1859.

⁷¹ *Id.*, Feb. 25, 1860.

⁷² *Id.*, Feb. 2, 3, 9, 11; etc.

The national organization of the new Constitutional Union party was soon completed and a call was sent out for the meeting of a national convention in May at Baltimore. A union of the entire opposition, North and South, was still talked about⁷³ but daily grew more and more improbable. The Democratic split at Charleston seemed favorable to the Constitutional Union cause,⁷⁴ and the organizers and leaders of the movement were hopeful, though at no time especially optimistic or confident of success.

The national convention was held at Baltimore on the ninth of May. Instead of adopting a regular platform, it merely declared, in the words of Clay, for the "Constitution of the country, the Union of the States, and the enforcement of the laws". John Bell of Tennessee and Edward Everett of Massachusetts were nominated as the party's candidates for president and vice-president. Both old-line Whigs of long experience in public affairs and of known conservatism, they were fit representatives of the Union sentiment of both sections.

The nomination of Lincoln by the Republicans probably checked the current, in the South as well as in the North, that was flowing into the Constitutional Union party, for many had anticipated the selection of Seward, the "arch-agitator".⁷⁵ But the nomination of Bell and Everett was received and endorsed with considerable enthusiasm and an active campaign was con-

⁷³ See F. P. Blair to Crittenden, Feb. 16, 1860; Coleman, *Life of J. J. Crittenden*, II, 186, *cf.* 190.

⁷⁴ *National Intelligencer*, May 9, 1860.

⁷⁵ B. F. Perry of South Carolina, in a letter to the editors of the *National Intelligencer*, dated Aug. 13, declared that "Mr. Fillmore became President of the United States with a worse record than Lincoln on the slavery question". In issue of Aug. 23, 1860.

ducted in the South. It was pointed out that the hopes for the permanence of the Union were in this conservative party. Many southern Democrats, who questioned the wisdom of the influences which now controlled their party there and who still loved the Union, some of them former Whigs, took their places as recruits in its ranks. The movement gained strength as the canvass drew to a close. Its opponents, even, came to concede its strength in the South.⁷⁶

But early returns in November showed that the worst had happened—that the Republicans had successfully elected Lincoln,⁷⁷ and that the moment had arrived when the great test of the strength of the Union was to be made. During the campaign the Constitutional Union men had answered the declarations of the ultras for disunion in the event of Lincoln's election, by announcing that they intended to give the successful candidate a fair trial and to wait for some overt act against the South before resorting to the final remedy of the oppressed. Now that the crisis arrived they repeated this announcement. They were resolved to exhaust all rational and honorable expedients for obtaining a redress of southern grievances within the Union. They were the advocates and supporters of schemes of compromise by which the integrity of the Union might be preserved. They commended Crit-

⁷⁶ Cf. *Montgomery Confederation*, in *Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor*, Oct. 26; Moulton (Ala.) *Democrat*, in *National Intelligencer*, Aug. 29, 1860.

⁷⁷ Bell carried Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. His popular vote in the South, which totaled over half a million, shows that the strength of the Constitutional Union party compared favorably with that of the Whig party in 1852 and of the American party in 1856. His largest support naturally came from the former strongholds of whiggery in the South.

tenden for the compromise proposals which he was urging in the Senate.⁷⁸

But the disunion leaders rapidly got control of the situation. Less than six weeks after the presidential election, the South Carolina convention adopted an ordinance of secession. Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, and Texas soon followed this example, so that before the middle of February, 1861, the entire lower South was supposedly out of the Union. A southern confederacy was organized and the officers of its government selected over two weeks prior to the inauguration of Lincoln.

The Constitutional Union men in the legislatures and state conventions usually opposed the policy of withdrawing from the Union; in all these states, however, they found themselves in a hopeless minority. They carried on the struggle with more success in the border states where secession ordinances were either refused consideration or easily defeated. But the bombardment of Fort Sumter, followed promptly by Lincoln's proclamation calling upon the militia of the states and revealing the policy of coercion, aroused the proud spirit of the southerners. They resented this action, which, they saw, made certain the invasion of the South by northern troops—a final desecration of southern rights. The result was that Virginia, Tennessee, North Carolina, and Arkansas now de-

⁷⁸ Some of them favored compensated emancipation of the slaves upon the initiative of the slave states in preference to the invasion of a northern army with "Freedom to Slaves" inscribed on its banner. See Geo. F. Sallé to Crittenden, Mobile, Jan. 18, 1861, Crittenden MSS. After all, said Petigru, a leading South Carolina Whig, "there was something in the heart of every good man that told him that slavery was wrong". Perry, *Reminiscences of Public Men*, 259.

clared their independence and joined the Confederate States.

Nothing remained for the former Union men of the South but to acquiesce in the will of the majority. Many of them still doubted the right of secession,⁷⁹ but the question was no longer solely one of constitutional theory. The Union seemed doomed, a "revolution" had been proclaimed, and the cause of the South was their cause. They promptly rose to the defence of their section against the hostile invader from the North, resolved, as one of their ablest leaders declared, "to go to the devil with the rest".⁸⁰

Throughout the thirty years that preceded the decision of the South to work out its own salvation as a separate political entity, the Democratic majority had been checked by an opposition composed of all the conservative elements of that section. If the former had more frequently controlled the situation by arraying under its banner the more humble citizens who were strong in the democracy of numbers, the latter included the representatives of property and of capital, those inevitable incentives to conservatism. Slaves constituted a large portion of the property of the successful planter, that of the capitalist of the city or large town was of a more readily convertible type; but their interests were essentially the same and they soon joined in political union to protect them.

The planters of the lower South had early imbibed strict state rights doctrines, which can in that connec-

⁷⁹ See Jeremiah Clemens to Crittenden, Nov. 24, 1860; F. M. Aldridge to Crittenden, Dec. 31, 1860, Crittenden MSS.

⁸⁰ Perry, *Reminiscences of Public Men*, 259.

tion be regarded as evidence either of radicalism or of conservatism. That they themselves regarded state rights as a conservative factor which would protect them in their vested interests, is evident when we note the motives for the reversal of their policy in the early forties. Their opponents had formerly been Union men, at a time, however, when vigorous nationalism seemed to menace the rights of the great property-owning class of the South. Later the planting aristocracy had formed a coalition with allies in the North to secure more certain protection against the disorganizing forces of Jacksonian Democracy. It was a reversal of policy to which the Democrats easily adapted themselves by taking up the advocacy of state rights, avowedly in defense of the slave institution. From this time on, the Whigs of the South were the Unionists, Unionism being a brand of conservatism which is more in keeping with our traditional ideas. Disorganizing sectional schemes always came from the Democracy and were always regarded with suspicion by its opponents, who saw in any attempt at disunion, with the consequences that were sure to follow, an inevitable source of injury to vested rights: hence they sang praises to the Union and to the blessings which it yielded the nation; hence they rallied to its defence, and welcomed all schemes of compromise by which its existence might be prolonged. In this spirit, they staved off the first effort in 1850 and 1851 to withdraw the southern states from the Union and the moral influence of this victory delayed for nearly a decade the next and more nearly successful attempt.

But five years of intensive and unveiled anti-slavery agitation in the North had raised in the minds of some

of the slaveholders the fear that their policy had been false. The younger generation was ready for something more spirited and aggressive and looked with favor upon the withdrawal of the slave states from a compact that placed them at the mercy of a hostile majority in the North, a majority which failed to understand the spirit of southern institutions. But the older heads, true to the teachings of southern Whig Unionism, generally sought until the last to prevent a settlement of the merits of the contestants in the sectional controversy by the arbitrament of arms. Finally, however, they realized that their ranks had been steadily depleted, that they had become an impotent minority, and that the contest was inevitable. At once they reminded themselves that the aim of those who had taken the lead in the withdrawal of the South was to protect its institution and its rights, that this was, after all, but the logical result of the old conservative doctrines of the thirties. So they acquiesced in the situation and gave themselves and their sons to fight the battles of the South in defence of southern rights and southern independence.

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¹ Unless otherwise specified, these collections of unpublished sources are to be found in the manuscripts division of the Library of Congress.

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reader. They have been used, however, critically and with due caution. The list includes the leading papers of both parties at the capital for the entire period. They were supplemented by the leading metropolitan dailies of the North and by the local Whig journals of the southern states. Circumstances have combined to make the dependence upon them greater for the latter part of the study. It is fortunate that the files become more complete after 1848. For the earlier period, *Niles' Register* renders inestimable service in excerpting the local journals. Itself Whig in politics, it was ever on the lookout for material relative to whiggery in the South, where the situation was always precarious. With its ending in 1849, we lose a most valuable source. The later period, too, is scanty in contemporary correspondence, both printed and manuscript. From the forties on, therefore, newspapers play, of necessity, a more important rôle as sources. For the character and importance of special journals, see chapter iii. The Whig papers are in certain instances supplemented by those of Democratic connections.

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- United States Telegraph*, 1830-1837.
- The Washington Union*, 1846-1858 (Dem.).

New York.

- New York Morning Express*, 1848-1855.
- New York Herald*, 1850-1853.
- The Log Cabin*, 1840-1841.
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Philadelphia.

- Evening Bulletin*, 1847-1852 (Ind.).
- Public Ledger*, 1848-1850, 1855-1856 (Ind.).
- North American and United States Gazette*, 1850-1852.
- Pennsylvanian*, 1852 (Dem.).

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Buffalo Commercial Advertiser, 1852.

Maryland.

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Baltimore American, 1849-1853.

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Richmond Daily Whig, 1849-1852.

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The Southern Weekly Patriot (Greenville), 1851.

Georgia.

The Columbus Enquirer, 1841-1847.

The Southern Recorder (Milledgeville), 1843, 1851-1852.

The Savannah Daily Republican, 1836-1860.

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The Weekly Floridian (Tallahassee), 1846-1854.

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Mobile Daily Advertiser, 1849-1860.

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Mississippi.

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Flag of the Union (Jackson), 1850-1853.

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The Daily Courier (Natchez), 1853.

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The Southern Journal (Monticello), 1853-1854 (Dem.).

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Tennessee.

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Kentucky.

The Frankfort Commonwealth, 1841, 1849.

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The Missouri Republican (St. Louis), 1849-1854.

St. Louis Daily Intelligencer, 1850-1851.

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Account of Great Whig Festival held in Baltimore, November 12, 1835, Baltimore, 1835.

Proceedings of the Democratic Whig Convention, December 4, 1839, for the purpose of nomination of President and Vice-President.

Address to the People of Maryland, by the Whig Central Committee of Maryland, ———, 1840.

Proceedings of the Caucus of Whig Members of Congress, September 11, 13, 1841.—This was the caucus that read Tyler out of the party.

Defence of the Whigs, by a member of the twenty-seventh Congress, New York, 1844.

Secret History of the Perfidies, Intrigues, and Corruptions of the Tyler Dynasty, etc., Washington and New York, 1845.
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Sketch of the Life and Public Services of Zachary Taylor, People's candidate for the Presidency, Washington, 1848.

Taylor Text-book and Ready Reckoner, Baltimore, 1848.

Cass and Taylor on the Slavery Question, Boston, 1848.

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To the Whigs of Virginia, by John M. Botts, March 8, 1848.

- The Position and Course of the South*, by W. H. Trescott, Charleston, 1850.
- On the Dissolution of the Union*. Letter of W. J. Grayson to Governor W. B. Seabrook, Charleston, 1850.
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- Address of T. L. Clingman to the citizens of North Carolina*, Washington, January 12, 1853.
- Why old line Whigs should attach themselves to the Democratic party*, by Thomas S. Gholson.
- Whig Policy analyzed and illustrated*, by Josiah Quincy, Boston, 1856.
- Address of Old Line Whig*, 1856.—In favor of Buchanan for president.
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- John Bell: His Past History connected with the Public Service*, Nashville, 1860.
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- Parson Brownlow, and the Unionists of East Tennessee: with a sketch of his life*, New York, 1862.

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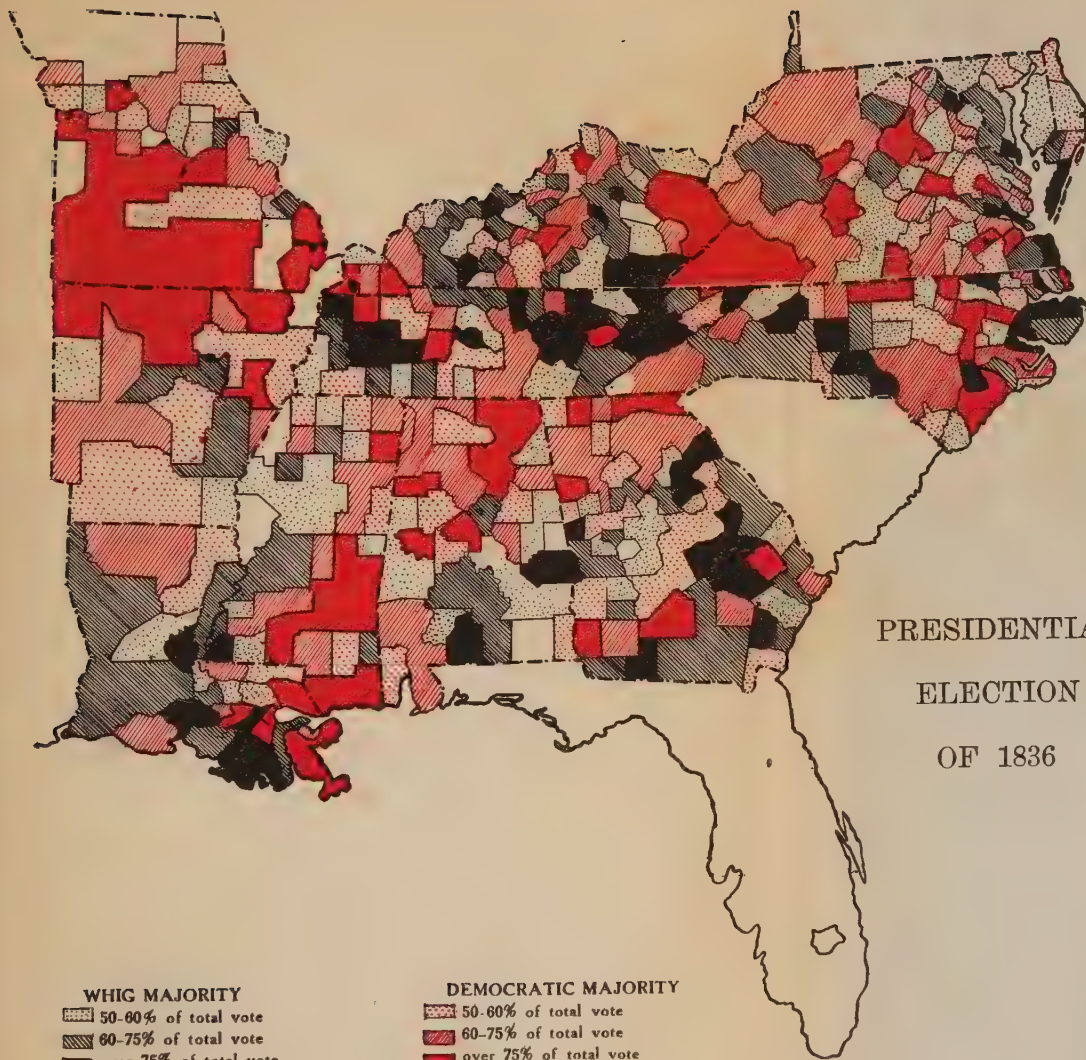
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APPENDIX.

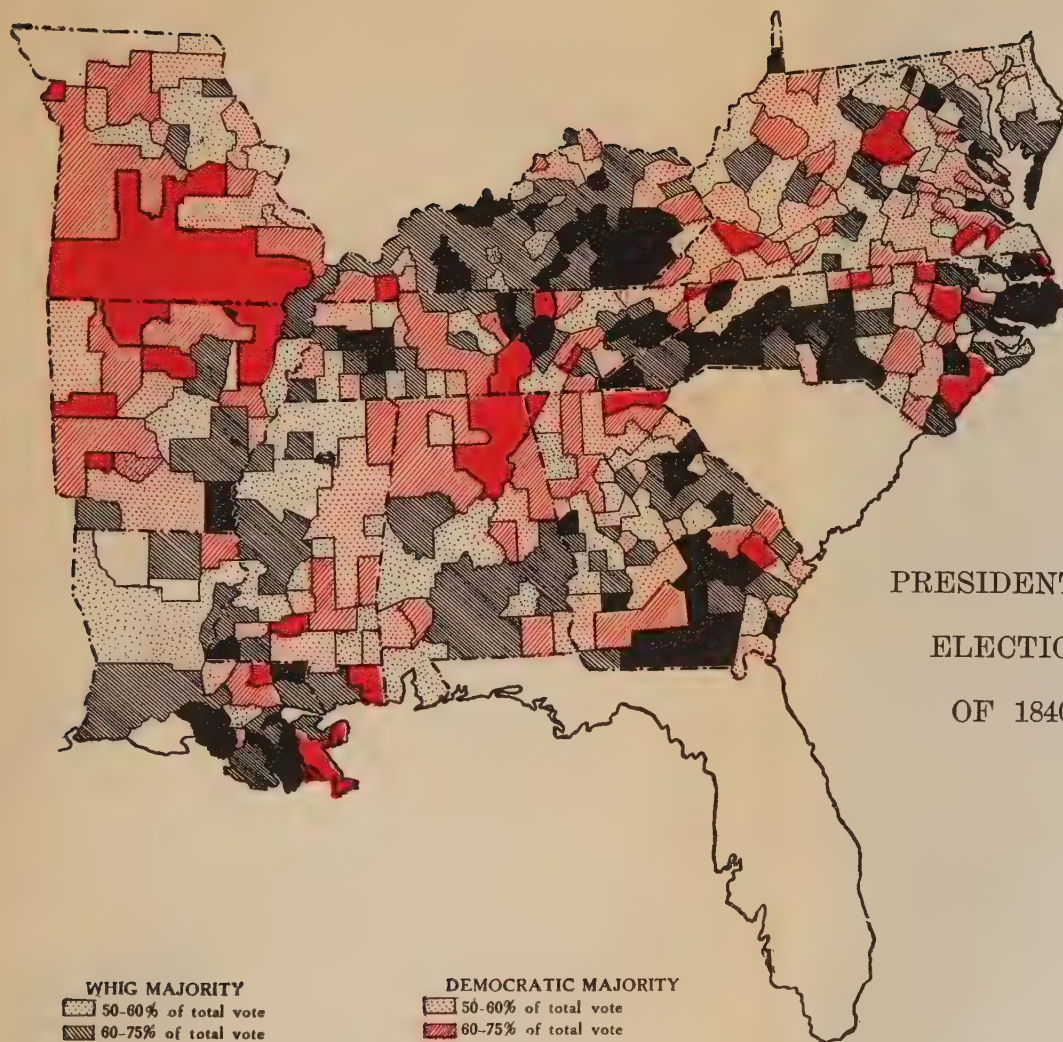
MAPS.

The accompanying maps are of importance as a means of indicating the local areas of Whig strength in the South. The election returns are plotted by counties, but the boundary lines between such contiguous counties as have the same proportionate vote have been omitted. The map showing the relative proportions of white and negro population in 1850 (plate VI) is plotted in the same way. Majorities are represented in three grades. This is essential, as mere majority would be an indefinite indication of a strength somewhere between 50 per cent and 100 per cent of the total count. Furthermore, a 40 to 50 per cent minority is often nearly as indicative of strength as an actual majority.

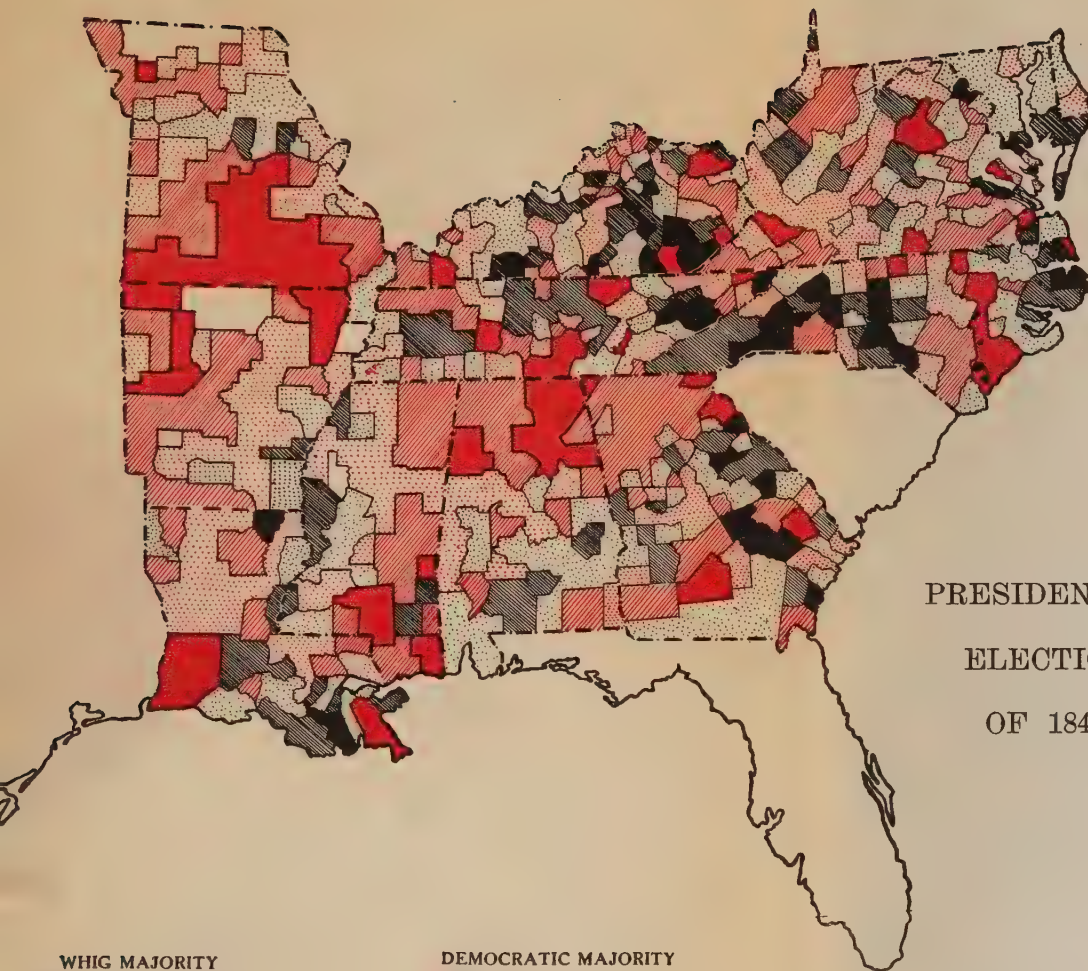
Upon careful analytical and comparative study, these maps will be found to throw light on the character of the political parties in the ante-bellum South. In general, they show that from the election of 1836 to the election of 1852 there was a continuance of Whig and Democratic strength or weakness in certain definite regions. The regions of Whig strength are to be identified with those districts which were drawn by economic interests to the support of the "American system", or with those in which the negro-slave-plantation system predominated. The first conclusion we should expect on *à priori* grounds; the other is one which requires more proof, as less to be expected. The maps, however, leave little room for doubt on this score. For a comparison of the maps plotting the presidential votes with the one indicating white or negro-slave preponderance shows that wherever there was a negro majority or a significant minority there could be found, with no important exceptions, a Whig majority or uncertain Democratic control.



PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION
OF 1836



PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION
OF 1840



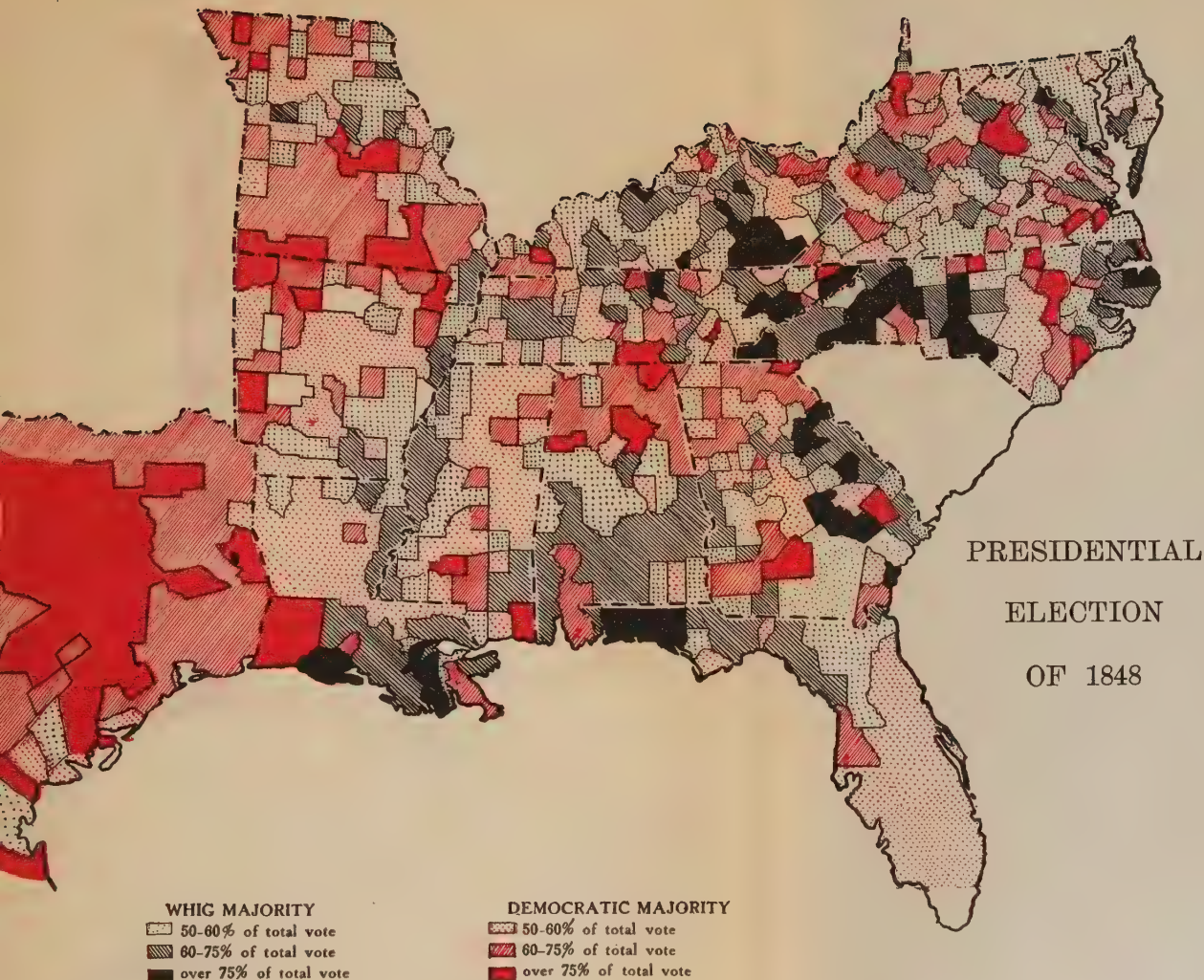
PRESIDENTIAL
ELECTION
OF 1844

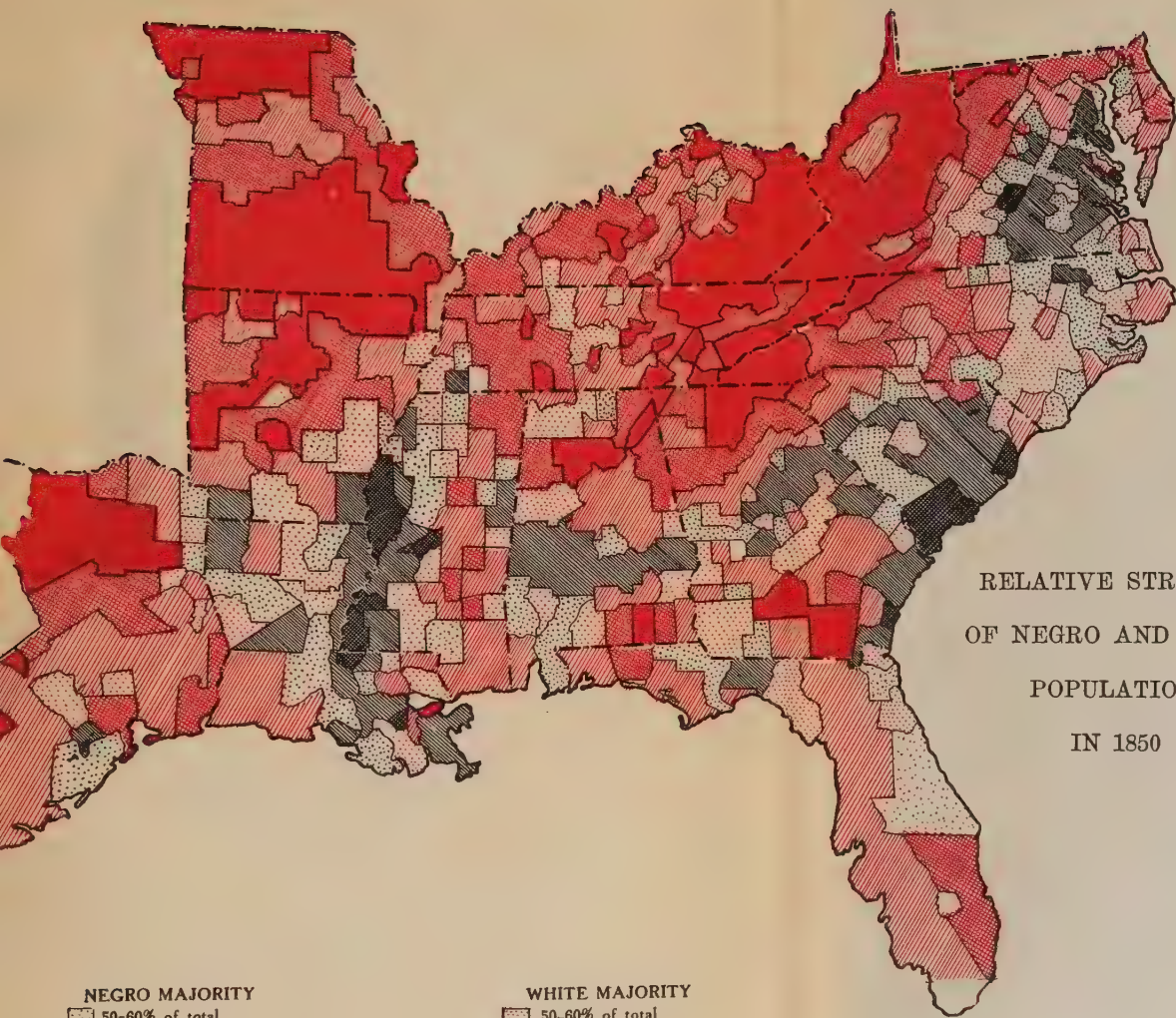
WHIG MAJORITY

- 50-60% of total vote
- 60-75% of total vote
- over 75% of total vote

DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

- 50-60% of total vote
- 60-75% of total vote
- over 75% of total vote





RELATIVE STRENGTH
OF NEGRO AND WHITE
POPULATION
IN 1850

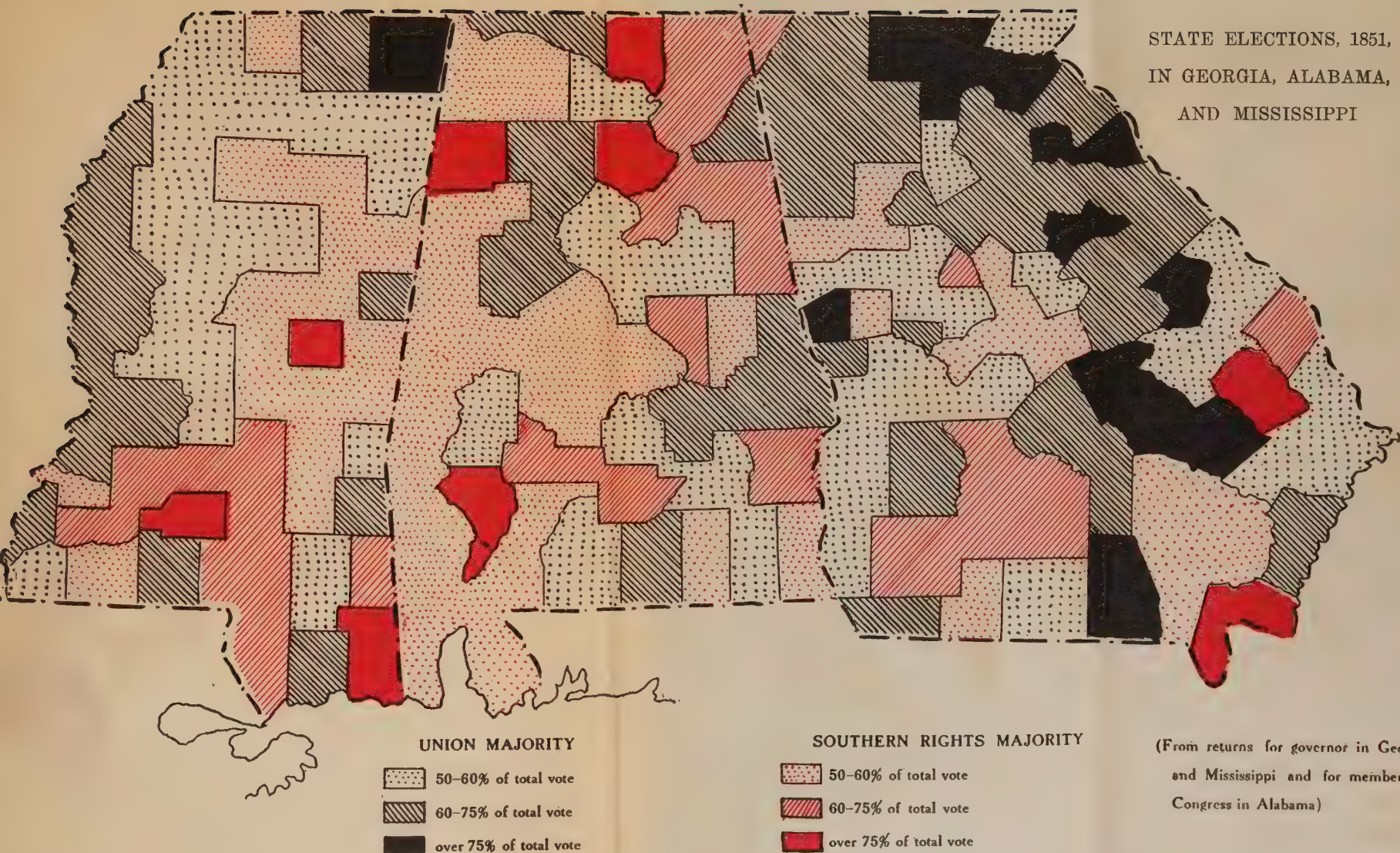
NEGRO MAJORITY

- 50-60% of total
- 60-75% of total
- 75-90% of total

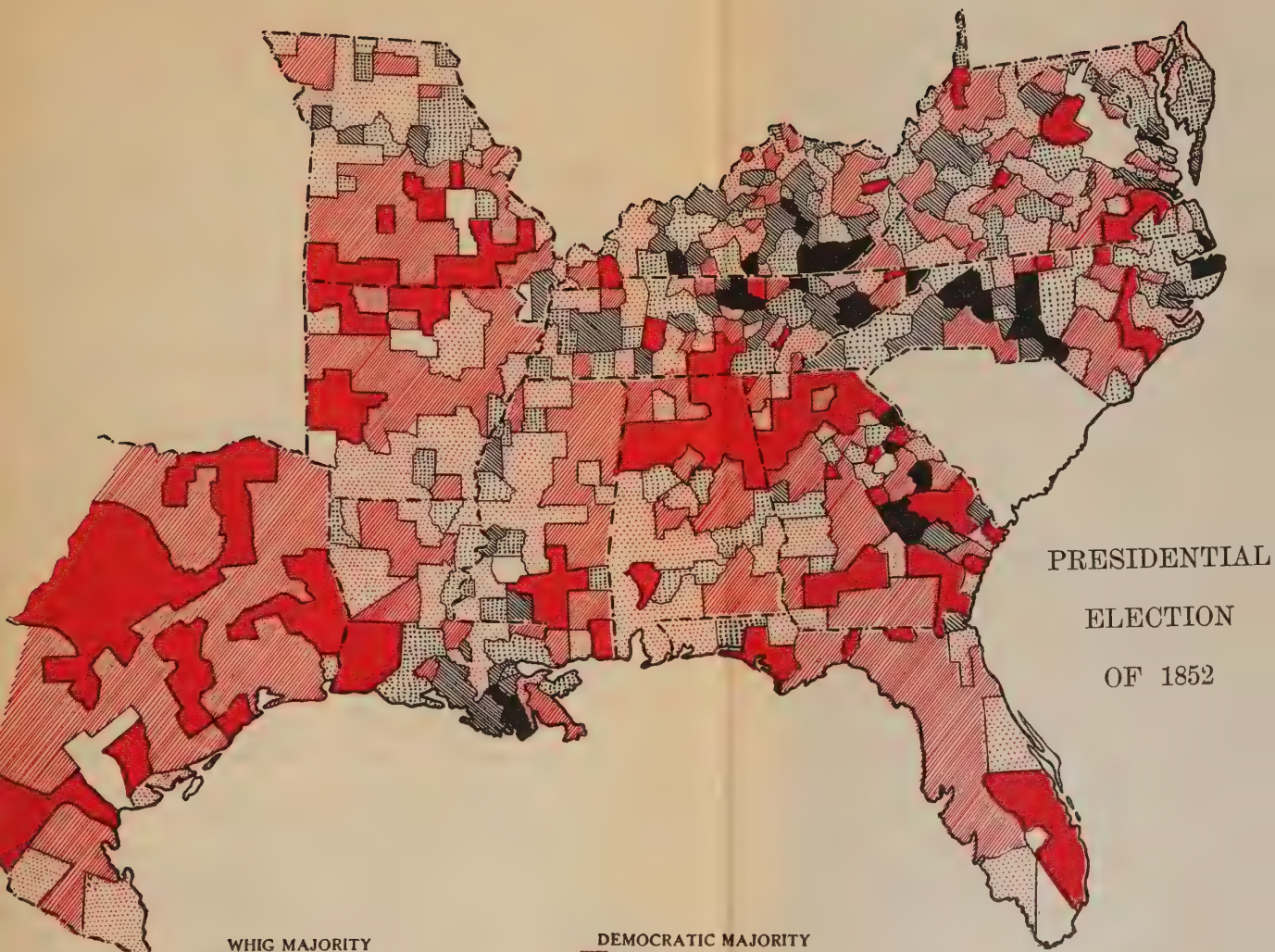
WHITE MAJORITY

- 50-60% of total
- 60-75% of total
- 75-90% of total
- over 90% of total

STATE ELECTIONS, 1851,
IN GEORGIA, ALABAMA,
AND MISSISSIPPI



(From returns for governor in Georgia
and Mississippi and for members of
Congress in Alabama)



WHIG MAJORITY

- 50-60% of total vote
- 60-75% of total vote
- over 75% of total vote

DEMOCRATIC MAJORITY

- 50-60% of total vote
- 60-75% of total vote
- over 75% of total vote

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